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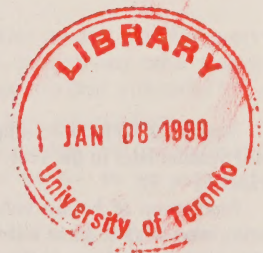
Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Organization

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 18 December 1989

Wednesday 17 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 18 December 1989

The committee met at 1226 in committee room 2.

ORGANIZATION

The Chair: We will call this committee to order. We have a number of orders of business to deal with and I have before me a letter of resignation from Steve Mahoney.

Now we will get formal on this thing. Honourable members, it is my duty to call upon you to elect the vice-chair. Do we have a nomination for vice-chair?

Ms Poole: I would be delighted to put forward the name of Frank Miclash as vice-chair.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Before we go any further, I would like to make a point of order about what the process will be for speeches by the candidates and by their nominators. I would like to see some kind of restriction placed on this.

The Chair: One hour.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One hour or so would be good.

The Chair: One hour would be good. Okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: An Audrey McLaughlin speechwriter is available.

The Chair: So is Simon De Jong's.

Ms Poole: We all know Mr Miclash's sterling qualifications.

The Chair: Hold it now, I have not closed the nominations yet. We have to do a few processes first.

Ms Poole: Sorry about that.

The Chair: That is another sterling person in this House. Any other nominations?

Mrs O'Neill: I move that nominations be closed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is railroading, you know.

The Chair: CPR Miclash.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Democracy evolves in Europe and here we cannot even have a debate.

The Chair: Seeing that there is only one nomination, I do not know that the speeches and all of that are appropriate.

I declare nominations closed. Mr Miclash is the vice-chair. Congratulations.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As another point of order, it should be noted that two northern members have now virtually taken over control of this committee and again the north, with its 15 seats or whatever there are up there—

The Chair: Seventeen.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —is basically trying to wag the dog again, if I can put it that way.

Mrs O'Neill: Does that happen frequently?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Every day in our caucus.

The Chair: It shows the importance of the north.

Okay, let's move on here, because we have a fair agenda before we have to quit. A designation of a Metropolitan Toronto member for signing authorities is the next order of business. Mr Keyes is here.

Mr Keyes: Sorry for being late, but I was held up by the choir.

The Chair: Just to keep it southern—well, it has to be Metro—I would ask that Richard Johnston's name be put in as a Metro member for signing purposes. Is that agreed by the committee?

Agreed.

The Chair: Before we deal with the report of the subcommittee, is there any other technical business that we have to deal with today?

Mr Jackson: I have a minor item.

The Chair: Can we deal with that and then we will deal with the reports, so we can leave it open-ended?

Mr Jackson: It has to do with our last report and the fact that it has not been published or circulated as yet. I was talking to one of the deputants as recently as Thursday and she indicated she had recently received a call from somebody asking if they had a French version of their report which could get published.

Clerk of the Committee: I have made calls asking people if they had a French version of their title that we could print in the report. Was that the confusion?

Mr Jackson: It may be. Be that as it may, we still do not have a report published. Regarding this conversation, I was led to believe that the

individual said, "Well, the report will not be ready until late January or early February."

Whether that is true or not is not the point. As a committee, we should resolve the issue which our previous chair was able to do in terms of getting out a report in a timely fashion when it is relevant. School board trustees across this province are now grappling with the implications of the transfer payments and their budgets. Those meetings of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs started in the first week of January when I was on the committee.

The Chair: They have already started, yes.

Mr Jackson: So I would certainly like us to resolve that.

The Chair: I can report back on that right now, actually.

Mr Jackson: Then I have a certain matter that is in the report which has just come to light recently. I have flagged Bob Gardner on it and I really do want to address it.

The Chair: Okay. The first item is the time of the report. It is at the printers now, I understand. The French translation and all of that stuff is done so it should be mid-January. We are looking at going through all the technical stuff and coming back some time in mid-January because that is the printer's deadline. Okay? That should be the release time, however it is done.

1230

Regarding the French thing, there was some thought given to those who had theirs in French so that we could move up the agenda a bit to allow for that release time, then anybody who did have it would save our translators—I understand that is reasonably normal practice if it is available. It is not asking it to be available; just is it available? In some cases it is and, therefore, we can save some time with the translation because it is basically that part of their report, and chunks taken out of it are verbatim French, but I do not know that anybody—except for the title—was officially notified; not anybody that I know of.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What commitment do we have from the printers on a date? Do we have a commitment?

The Chair: We are looking at 22 January.

Clerk of the Committee: Hopefully, before that. I have taken the English in. That is being worked on in stages where they can piece it in. They have done the artwork on the cover and I got a call from the translator today saying that he was sending over the translation. I will have to

have that proofread. I hope to have it down to the printers by the end of the week.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I cannot imagine us getting it before 22 January.

Mr Jackson: No. It is camera ready. The whole report is camera ready and the cover is the same, except for switching a word and the date.

The Chair: Translation, though, is time consuming as well.

Mrs O'Neill: I do not see a connection between boards' budgets in that there are only recommendations. I know that it might change some of their thinking but they have to go with the way things are. I do not know about your board but our board started in October this year because it knew there were transportation grant changes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the more important thing is that a number of our recommendations are time specific and it is to be out in January.

The Chair: I realize that and I am going to do everything I can to make sure that it is out on 22 January or as close to that date as possible.

Mr Jackson: The second point I wanted to raise very briefly was with my late awareness of the fact that the report was changed to cover off the denied access to a health program for private school students.

The Chair: Excuse me for one second. Sorry. It has just been pointed out that because the report has not yet been released, and since we are in public hearing, perhaps these may be in-camera deliberations.

Mr Jackson: Not necessarily.

The Chair: The report has not been released yet and therefore what you may say—

Mr Jackson: The matters I have raised are matters which are in the public sector because they are specific to the case.

The Chair: Fine. Okay.

Mr Jackson: The matter that I raised was with respect to who ultimately is responsible for changing legislation. When we left our original report it was that the Ministry of Education amend Bill 82, which says that the only schools eligible are the public and separate boards. I have supplied Dr Gardner with a letter from the Minister of Health (Mrs Caplan). I was satisfied with her response that she has denied the opportunity to do this because of the Education Act. That is essentially what her letter said.

The member for Essex South (Mr Mancini) also indicated it was an Education responsibility.

Now our report says that the Ministry of Health should change. That means the Ministry of Health cannot follow our recommendation. Our recommendation is a nonrecommendation by virtue of the fact that it falls in the wrong ministry.

Dr Gardner can speak to this. I am advised that the Ministry of Education convinced him of the arguments that it was a Ministry of Health matter. There are two things I do not wish to happen: that this is Elinor Caplan's responsibility when it is not, and that our recommendation is completely lost by virtue of the fact that it does not hit the mark.

Since we have not published, I would like the matter resolved or the direction of the committee to (a) withdraw the recommendation, if that is the intent of the committee, or (b) to give it its proper clarity and we will back it up. One or the other.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do raise a point of order, though, that if we are going to get into that specifically, we should do that in camera because the clerk would essentially be putting one recommendation of the report on the record and none of the others on the record.

The Chair: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If we are going to move on this, and it sounds to me that we should do something, then I would suggest the easiest time to do it would be right after the other business, rather than going in camera now.

Mr Jackson: I will second that.

Mrs O'Neill: Is this meeting going to be over at one o'clock?

Mr R. F. Johnston: As soon as this one is over, why do we not go in camera?

The Chair: Just hang on a second.

Ms Poole: I think Mr Jackson has already put a number of comments on the record. I suggest that we might be able to resolve this very quickly without going into great detail if our recommendation was just changed to say that the appropriate ministries meet and discuss—

Interjections.

The Chair: If I might, let's deal with the committee report and go in camera after this discussion because I think we are wandering into a minefield.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It should not take us long.

The Chair: The minefield being the public nature, not the content.

Let's move to the report of the subcommittee. There are a couple of items of clarification for the

committee, and I dealt with these at the steering committee level.

In the process by which we were going to get to this point, I was taken by a lot of research in looking at what the committee had done before, some of the deliberations and some of the discussions that had been ongoing, and then I was hit with an 11 December timetable to plan when we were supposed to meet and travel, if we were going to travel, or whatever. We had to put some things together very quickly. Mr Johnston was not available at that time due to health reasons and I took it upon myself to do that.

I came back to the subcommittee and the subcommittee decided to recommend to this committee a course of action which fits into the general overall theme but is a more focused approach. We would like to recommend to the committee that we deal with the aspect of early childhood education and take the time starting 22 January, not 15 as we had intended, although taking a couple of days in that first week, if we can, to hear from deputants and perhaps visit some of the facilities that we would be talking about, and then moving on to a report phase towards the first week in March.

If anybody wants to amplify or more fully contend with the material that we are going to be covering, we did not have any of that information available today to deal with, but we look at charging our staff to develop some of the material on early childhood education.

Mrs O'Neill: Is this tied in to the government initiative in four-and five-year-old kindergarten?

The Chair: Could be.

Mrs O'Neill: You have no idea yet how you are going to put out the request for deputants? I think it is going to be very important, as it was when we started this whole process in 1987, and part of 1988, that we say exactly what we are looking for because that is a very broad field, early childhood education.

This is just an aside. Did you say you had a resignation from Mr Mahoney? I just wondered who the people were on the committee and if there had been any changes.

The Chair: No changes; just Mr Mahoney resigning as vice-chair.

But you are right; that is why we brought it to the committee sort of broadly so we can narrow in, as we did with the steering committee.

Mr Keyes: I want to spend some time to see exactly the direction we are going in with early childhood education, how it does tie in—at one time I was not sure that was the direction we were

taking—and the timing factor, whether or not we should be advertising now for deputants to come before us when they really had not had an opportunity to make the representation they want on early childhood education. The government made some initiatives in the throne speech and I want to be sure how this ties in. Certainly, it is one that is getting a fair amount of interest among the general public, both positively as well as negatively.

Ms Poole: I was going to bring up a number of the issues Mrs O'Neill did. The first is that the subject matter is far too broad and I, for one, would be quite happy to concentrate on the early childhood education focus, but I think it is very important that we decide whether we are talking about adult education or early childhood, what specific focus.

1240

The second problem is going to be getting deputants for 15 January.

Mrs O'Neill: They do not go back to school until 8 January.

Ms Poole: If we choose to advertise, from past experience it does take a long time to get the ads out and even if we send a letter as of tomorrow to each of our previous deputants and invite them to come, I think there are going to be some objections to the short notice, to the fact there is a long Christmas holiday in between and that they will not have time to prepare.

The Chair: The steering committee looked at it and quite readily identified that as an issue. You are absolutely right. What we had planned to do was that there may be some that we can do in that first week of the 15th and that is why we are leaving it open. But we may not start until the 17th or 18th because of the lack of deputants or other information that we are looking for. But you are absolutely right. As far as the other topic goes, that is why we focused on early childhood education. Even though that is a fairly broad topic, it is not as broad as the other one.

Ms Poole: Even if we went to the week of the 22nd to actually start the initial hearings—

The Chair: We are looking at that.

Ms Poole: —I still see a problem in that the schools are not back in till 8 January. So many of those in the teaching profession will, even extending it to the 22nd, have a great deal of difficulty. I think it is something we should try to deal with today if we can.

Mrs O'Neill: They will prepare presentations during their holidays, I am positive.

Ms Poole: We can fax the letter out tomorrow then.

The Chair: That is why we are aiming at a number of those kinds to come in on 5 February.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are in the process of trying to narrow it down. What we were given when we first started in the meeting of the steering committee was a very broad notion of lifelong learning that we were going to look at, and it seemed to me hugely problematic in terms of just getting any kind of a focus that would produce a report of any sort within the three-week period that would be useful. It would have provided us with a bit of travel, but not necessarily a report.

Mr Furlong: I voted for that because you said you never went to California.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have not been to California. It looks like I am not going to get there.

I keep doing this to myself, it seems to me. The three of us actually came to a consensus on it fairly quickly. We looked at two aspects and I suggested one of the first things we talked about earlier on was the whole question of technical education. An adult focus was, very early on in the committee, one of the things we wanted to look at.

Trying to do that quickly is even more problematic than trying to deal with the early entry, if we can put it that way, into the education system, or where it should take place; when it should take place. Bob Gardner suggested that it would be easier for them to provide background material for us on early childhood than it would be to do it on the technical stuff in a way that would prepare us, let alone get people in to see us this early.

Our timing is going to be constrained because of the activities of the standing committee on social development and conflicts of members and that kind of thing. So we are caught pretty much with this early half of the break to be able to deal with these kinds of things.

Mrs O'Neill: As I understand it, we are not going to meet again until the first two weeks of March.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is right, and that is why we have that earlier period to actually deal with this kind of stuff.

One of the suggestions Bob made reminded me of something I had raised a while back, which is, if we are looking at these early development questions, then really what we should do is get some people from the Ontario Institute for

Studies in Education and elsewhere to talk to us about the theories of educational development. Before we can rationally start to talk about when and how we should be dealing with early childhood education, whether it should be at age four, what the class sizes should be and all that sort of thing, going through that primary division, we should really get ourselves informed about the developmental theory; about what kids learn, when and how they best learn it, etc.

We could easily spend the first couple of days doing that, hearing from ministry people about that kind of thing and getting in some very particular kinds of groups around the issues involved, because it seems to me that a number of people may want in on this in ways which we might not be able to picture.

One of the things I thought of right away were the family studies teachers who a number of years ago came before the legislative committee saying, "We need much more emphasis again on family studies and the use of hands-on experience in terms of learning how to parent, etc, etc, that day care within the schools can provide us," etc. They may very well want to come in and talk about some of those kinds of angles, if I can put it that way, that we might not have been anticipating.

We need to find out some comparisons between jurisdictions about when official entry into school takes place and what the expectations are of people at various levels, whether they are the same as or different from ours. I think that kind of thing would be interesting to get and, again, if there is someplace that would be sensible for us to go and look at and we could do that at the beginning rather than at the end, that would be something that would buy us some time for the public presenters to get themselves ready; or maybe we could bring people to us from other jurisdictions who had done some work on this, find out about them, and then get some public response to our invitations.

I also was suggesting that rather than writing, we should phone some of our key people in the next day or two and let them know what we are doing so that they can, in fact, have themselves ready by the 18th or whatever. The other angle I thought was important on this was that we actually have good report-writing time and debate time on this report. We always seem to be squeezing ourselves inevitably, it seems, around the time we have for actual discussion around where we are going.

If we could use much of the last week for actual debate on the writing of the report, I think

that really would be a useful thing for us. If we can get some of this happening on the 17th and 18th and then gradually move in our public presentations in the last two weeks or week and a half before we go into the writing of the report, I think that would be useful.

Mr Keyes: How many weeks are we actually counting on? Four weeks?

The Chair: About three and a half. The one problem I just had raised with me now with the week of 5 March, though, in which we were planning to go, is that because of other considerations it now is taken up by the standing committee on social development, so we may have to think that last week over and have it after that because a number of the committee members sit on social development and on this committee, I understand. I just see that fourth week as being a bit of a problem, because we do come back on 20 March, or the week of the 20th, which only leaves the other committees meeting on the 5th and the 12th.

Mrs O'Neill: If you want to meet with people, whoever they may be, we only need one week to do what we are going to do.

The Chair: I appreciate that. Let's leave it, though, with a bit of flexibility built in there that we will ask for, and we will be able to do that with the concurrence of the House leaders.

Mrs O'Neill: There is a whole group of people we have not heard from ever in this committee, and that is early childhood educators. They are feeling a bit miffed. I think it would be very good to try to get those people and the people who teach them at the community colleges to say a bit. It would be very good also, I think, to go and visit a community college early education centre. They are very interesting spots.

The other area we are going to have to get information on is what they are already doing in their identification regarding physical, mental and neurological disability. As you know, deaf children are the only ones who can get into the school system early, so that might be an area where we want to do some recommending. I would like to see us talked to either by regional directors or some directors of education to tell us what they feel has happened with the lowering of the pupil-teacher ratio in grades 1 and 2, besides everybody's saying grades 6, 7 and 8 enrolment went up. I would like to know. There must be something better happening.

The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario have done an awful lot of work in this area. As you know, I was very impressed

when I was parliamentary assistant to see just what they were doing there. They are a real resource. I am not as worried as Mr Johnston about the writing, because I think Dr Gardner understands it so much better.

I am amazed how well we did on the financing of education, which has to be one of the most difficult subjects. We did it over and over again, but there were not major changes.

1250

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think there are limitations in what goes in, if I could put it that way. That is the problem. It is not so much the quality of the production, I think, as you say, as a major statement about staff and its ability to synthesize. What it precludes is a kind of open-ended debate that actually can deal with some things that flow from things we heard in public hearings but which were not necessarily dealt with extensively.

One of the things we continually have had a problem with, it seems to me, is that we cannot do much more than this on this particular matter, because all we heard was this; now there is something we should look at later. But if you have a day or two for debate and then can talk it through a bit more, then you can do a little bit more. That is all I am saying. It just allows a little bit more reflection by committee members, which would add a bit more substance, if I can put it that way, to the reports, although I think we likely should be happy with them so far.

Mrs O'Neill: I think the writing of these reports has been one of the most exciting things I have done at Queen's Park. I am being very honest.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is pretty dull for you; I know that. Now I know things have been dull. There is a party tonight I should tell you about.

Mrs O'Neill: I really enjoyed the experience, folks.

Mr Jackson: And here I thought it was Bill 66.

Ms Poole: All this excitement, we cannot stand it. Could you run over the specific dates for us?

The Chair: It is the week of the 15th, but we are not sitting the 15th; it will probably be the 17th and 18th. That is our game plan now. Again, we have to call people and check with the ministry, but we expect that those will be the dates; the week of 22 January and the week of 5 February.

Ms Poole: That is the caucus retreat.

Mrs O'Neill: That is not to do with social development then.

The Chair: No. The next one was to be 5 March, but again, I understand we are going to have to deal with when we can meet in that fourth week. We may have to do some creative stuff.

Mrs O'Neill: Are we going to meet morning and afternoon?

The Chair: When the House is sitting, we might be able to get in the time there. But let's leave that in abeyance. We have met during this last session, so we may be able to have some flexibility to do that. That is the game plan right now.

Ms Poole: Okay. My second point has to do with presentations. Mrs O'Neill mentioned going to community colleges. I would also suggest that maybe we go to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, which has a fairly renowned early childhood education program, perhaps spend a day there and talk to some of the staff and students and find out exactly what the scenario is.

The Chair: That is the kind of thing that is local right around Queen's Park that I think we can arrange quickly. Maybe we can use the 17th and 18th for that kind of thing, or even the 15th and 16th if we need it. We are asking for the time and we may not get it, but again, if we do have the opportunity to visit these facilities, then I think we should take it.

Mrs O'Neill: And the Hospital for Sick Children is just down the street.

The Chair: Yes, as well, there are a number of these facilities almost within walking distance. It is a good suggestion and I think we should take it up.

Ms Poole: The third point I wanted to make is that if the steering committee could meet within the next day or so and make out a list of presenters who are specifically geared to early childhood education, then we not only could phone them as well as phoning our traditional presenters, but maybe later in the week we could also fax them a copy of what the mandate specifically is.

That brings me to my final point. Maybe it would be an opportune moment specifically to define what the mandate is. Do we want it to be more specific than just early childhood education and how it fits into our system today?

The Chair: I think if we took the overall title, that would give Dr Gardner and others a chance to look over some of the material they already have, plus answer those questions about who we are going to invite, phone and fax rather than

writing and advertising. Then we can get into it and the flexibility of working this thing out would have to be dealt with. I think also that if any members have suggestions, as you have made, of people you know of in the field, you can have these sent in to the clerk and get rolling on it so that we have our agenda kind of fixed.

It is a reasonably focused topic the way it is set up now: early childhood education. I think it covers a lot. There may be, as Mr Johnston mentioned, other aspects that we have not considered. That opens it up and leaves it open. I think it is a fairly well focused agenda. Then we can deal with that specific situation.

Ms Poole: I have one final point. Would there be any objection to individual members discussing with some of our contacts in the field the fact that the select committee will be meeting on this topic and inviting them to participate?

The Chair: Does anybody have any problems with that?

Ms Poole: Rather than having to go through the steering committee and sending an official letter.

The Chair: We did ask the committee to come up with suggestions. I think that is appropriate.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think it would be better done formally. Frankly, we have a limited amount of time and—who knows?—we may have to set priorities or we may not have to at all. I think it would be wise, therefore, to send things through the chair and the clerk, if you have got suggestions of local groups and contacts. That would be great. They should go to the chair.

The Chair: Yes, I will work closely with our clerk on that.

Ms Poole: Okay, so you would like us to go through either yourself or Tannis Manikel to make sure only one person is contacted.

The Chair: Yes, please.

Clerk of the Committee: The other thing that we could run into is a variety of people being contacted in one group, which could be awkward if they are not communicating with each other, as is sometimes the case.

The Chair: I do not think that precludes you asking advice of people you know in the field as to who you should get for this information, but the contact will come through us.

Mr Keyes: From the sound of it, it appears that we will stay and do it all this winter here in Toronto. But again I was going to make the offer: we are always happy to go to Kingston and Kingston does have, through our community

college, a very exceptional early childhood education program. They have also got a very important early identification program and a special nursery school early identification program for those children who have been identified.

If we did want to do one day out, I would be more than happy to go down in the morning on that 7:30 train, see all the facilities, visit all those and be back on the same day, if you wanted to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that train still on?

Mr Keyes: That one is on at the moment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is not one of the cuts, right?

Mr Keyes: The 15th is the day they cut it so we can make a historic last ride on it.

Mr Furlong: My question has been asked. I was just concerned about the timing so that I can arrange for substitutes—on another committee, of course.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are a couple of points that were raised that I wanted to respond to and I have lost a couple of them already. I think one of the things would be that we should try to go outside the city, if possible, if we are going to get an idea of what is happening out there.

I also like the idea of us not just going to the schools where ECE is under instruction, if I can put it that way, but rather look at the practical implications of it in the local high school or the local elementary school. Both would be good to see because they provide very different kinds of things. For instance, the high school would allow us to look at the way family studies does or does not integrate its work with the day care that is in the school. The elementary panel will help us in a number of things in terms of understanding how jurisdictions are handled within the schools between the principal and the people who are actually running the day care, how after-school programs mesh with the day care and that kind of thing. I think that would be useful.

It would also be neat if we did to bring in people from the day care system that is external to the schools and have them come and talk to us about the impact on them of the day care in the schools, etc, etc. I know of one or two instances, not in Kingston specifically, where the provision of day care in the schools has actually been very problematic for some of the nonprofit day cares within the system. Maybe we should hear about that and see if there are ways of co-ordinating things so that we could make recommendations in those kind of areas.

That was the one major area I thought we should expand, that kind of notion of who we actually do relate to. Mrs O'Neill's considerations around the Sick Kids Hospital, etc, are facets of all of this which are important, as is the early identification aspect of all of this. That would be another really good area.

In the matter of the title or the limits of where we go on this, I think if we look at this in terms of just where do day care, child care and early childhood education fit into the education system and how should they fit into it, that will provide people to come at it from the various angles that they will want to look at it from and should provide us with enough scope to look at questions around where this fits in for ourselves and we should not try to limit it much more than that.

1300

Mrs O'Neill: I was going to ask the question, which Richard seems to have answered, of whether we were going into the day care operation mode. Because this is really the select committee on education, I do not know whether or how far we should go into the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which is the area that deals with that. Certainly our caucus up in Ottawa has had a lot of input from both these groups—both the primary educators and the day care, commercial and nonprofit. They do not like to talk in the same room too often, I found; right at the moment, anyway.

I think we will have to be very definitive on who we are going to have here because there are thousands and thousands of day care operators of all stripes, colours, sizes and shapes in this province who want to be heard by legislators. They feel somewhat left out of what is going on at Queen's Park. If we are going to bring them in, as I say, I think we have to do it with some kind of order and format and association contacts.

It may be a really skilled balancing act that is needed if we are dealing with education, because they are not considered educators in many respects. It depends on who you talk to, it is true, but you know what I am saying; that they are not professional teachers and what they do has been more what we have been looking at.

I also find that if we do the "our contact" business, and even if we do go through you, what I find difficult about that is—and I do not know about the rest of you—I get people, especially in the area of education, talking about coming before a committee. I do not think we should raise their expectations that they are naturally going to get on our agenda because we cannot, as individuals certainly, make any promises that

even any association, let alone individual, can come to us unless we have some agreement within this committee, otherwise our lists will become endless.

Those are two words of caution I give, and that is from a bit of experience just in the last year with this whole area of day care and early education not always being in harmony.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On the second matter, I think people who want to come before us have to know they may or may not actually get to sit in the chair where Mr Keyes is at the moment; that is not guaranteed.

The other matter is that there has been a lot of evasion of some of the questions about what is education and what is custodial care within early childhood centres. But evading the issue is something which we cannot afford to do in terms of our mandate, which is to look at what is the future role of education, especially when we said we have to look at both ends in the future outside of the present parameters.

I have also discovered, for instance, in the child care coalition that is out there, that the debate has been joined now in the sense that people are now trying to look seriously at whether or not they want to see themselves evolve into the official education field, if I can put it that way, or whether they wish themselves to be kept separate in social services. I do not think we will necessarily get a lot of cohesive, absolute positions now in some of the fields that we might have had a while back.

Mrs O'Neill: They are very insecure at the moment.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But it is a very good time for us to be helping move along that debate and get people to think more sharply about what our expectations are, if I can put it that way, because we have allowed it to become an issue which just gets fuzzified with—

Mrs O'Neill: That is a good word.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you like that one? That is yours—fuzzified with people talking about when a teacher is not a teacher. It is interesting that this matter comes up so seriously in this end of things and yet, when we look at people who are instructing at the adult end of things, there has been a very interesting accommodation at that level.

I think there are creative solutions to these matters, but some of the issues revolve around what is education and what is our responsibility for providing it; at what ages; what makes it more success oriented than maybe our present very

strict entry notions are at the moment; things that we really have to look at and that those groups should look at, too.

The Chair: Okay. I sense we have a general agreement of where we are going. We will keep in touch and let you know what our lists are and the kinds of people we are looking at coming in. I will work, through Tannis, to make sure that we have a balance and that we have as much representation as we can, broadly. Any other comments before we go in camera?

Mrs O'Neill: Was the decision made to try and plan for a place like Kingston?

The Chair: Yes. We will try and work that in. I do not think that is a problem, although 7:30 trains may be a problem.

Mr Keyes: The evening before is not.

Mrs O'Neill: There has been a great movement and it is accelerating rather quickly in Ottawa to get tutors of heritage languages into university courses to become accredited in some way. They are working with both universities in Ottawa and it seems to be moving very quickly. It has been more or less imposed upon them by the title instructor, which some of them do not like.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly.

The Chair: If I could have your indulgence, we do have another matter to deal with in camera. The House starts at 1:30.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Why do we not adjourn and make our decision in camera?

Mr Jackson: Let's make our decision in camera.

The committee continued, in camera at 1307.

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Cooke, David S. (Windsor-Riverside NDP)

Furlong, Allan W. (Durham Centre L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Mahoney, Steven W. (Mississauga West L)

Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South PC)

O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

Poole, Dianne (Eglinton L)

Clerk: Manikel, Tannis**Staff:**

Gardner, Dr Robert J. L., Assistant Chief, Legislative Research Service

Pond, David, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday 17 January 1990

The committee met at 1415 in committee room 2.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Chair: Seeing a quorum, I will call this meeting of the select committee on education to order. We have a number of short items on the agenda. I appreciate that our guests are here, but we will deal with those first and then deal with general business.

I would like to start out by first saying that we had, as you are aware, the release of our third report this morning. It was an interesting experience for a northerner to go through the Toronto media process, but I think it was a good experience. I appreciate that members of the committee were present, especially the members of the steering committee who were also there.

I would like to draw your attention first to the proposed agenda. If you could take a look over it, at some point later on this afternoon, if you have questions or observations to make, I would entertain them. But I want to give you a few minutes to look it over before we move on.

My appreciation goes to the clerk of the committee, who has been in touch with me quite a fair bit to figure out, as much as we could, the agenda, given the time lines we were dealing with, which I realize were very tight. I appreciate the fact that a number of people have expressed the fact that they wanted to become more involved and were appreciative of the opportunity to be with us.

Bob Gardner may have some opening remarks to deal with on his understanding of the process. I will turn that over to him, if he would like to start his presentation.

Dr Gardner: There are two background papers from the research service on members' desks. The one that I did provides basically an overview of early childhood education, with some historical and contemporary material on Ontario, a brief review of the situation in other provinces and a bit of a look at the debates in the United States as a point of comparison. There is really an immense literature on early childhood education. I have just tried to give a sense of the main patterns that have been found and the overall lines of debate.

Luckily, we will also be hearing from the ministry people, of course, for the detailed information and from a number of experts, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and other institutions, who can fill us in on the absolutely up-to-date research.

The second paper is by Alison Drummond, whom many of you know from the standing committee on social development. Her paper looks at the major western European countries, again just by way of contrast. It looks at the links between early childhood education in the school systems and the systems of child care, of day care.

The Chair: Mr Johnston, did you want to raise your point of order at this point in time?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Before we actually get launched into the ministry's briefing, I want to make some comments to members about the fallout, if I can put it that way, from the press conference today. The French media are fairly miffed at us for ducking, as they saw it, major questions around financing and governance of French education in the province. After the press conference, in which they were relatively gentle, they came after me fairly hard, as the one person who was speaking French at the press conference, about why we had taken no major positions.

I indicated to them a couple of things. As it said in the report, there were a couple of matters before the courts, which had been one of the things that had kept us from dealing with it. Another was just the whole question of time and trying to come up with a consensus.

The third, in my view at least, was that there was an ongoing consultative committee of major players from the francophone community and the minister and ministry looking at potential amendments to Bill 75 at that point. As a result, we thought those were coming forward before our report would be out and it would be redundant or, worse than that, it would not even be up to what those amendments might actually be if we had a report dealing with them in some detail.

I think they understood that, but as you probably know if you have been following stuff in the papers the last few days, things have come to a fairly major impasse at the moment in terms of communication. The consultative committee

is no longer functioning. The ministry is, I think, coming forward with something in the next little while, but from what I gather, the people on that committee feel it does not address their needs and things are, if I can put it this way, at a bit of a confrontational stage.

Because one of our problems has been, and has been for this section, making decisions early about what we are going to do next—and we have had some complaints about how quickly we are moving on to this particular matter that is before us today—I wanted to suggest early to the committee that we should really think very seriously that, if in the next little while there are many unresolved issues around francophone education in the province, before we move on to other things maybe we should clear up that major financial and governance question from our perspective as a legislative committee, as to where things are going.

Therefore, not knowing what is going to come forward now from the ministry in the next little while, whether it is going to meet the demands of the community or whether it is going to set up a process to meet those demands, maybe we should be thinking very seriously, at least as a section of what we do next, of going back and looking at some of those concerns that were raised with us and some of the problems that the government is facing at the moment in terms of where to go with governance questions and finance questions around francophone education.

I just wanted to give notice now as we begin these hearings that by the end of them I think we are going to need to make a decision on that for the summer. As I say, it does not have to be everything that we did during the summer, but if it is still a very strong outstanding matter, it would not be appropriate for us to think that we have dealt with finance and leave undone all that which we did not presume we were doing, I think, as we wrote our last report.

The Chair: I appreciate those comments. That is something I certainly will take under advisement, and perhaps we can set aside some time in the next little while to try to plan that out. I certainly would be happy to entertain that as a proposal. Okay? Any other comments on what we have covered so far, in case there are other questions to be dealt with?

Mrs O'Neill: I just want to respond, if I may, to Mr Johnston's comments. I do think that the situation with litigations is something we cannot duck and I do feel that we will have to keep in very close touch with what is going on there,

especially if we are going to make decisions or recommendations. Hearings are one thing, but if we intend to respond, either in writing—well, we would respond in writing with a report on either governance or financing, but particularly governance. At this point we have about six outstanding litigations in this province—and I think we already have been presented with those, at least in a summarized form—so we would really have to do a lot of discussing about how we were going to handle that. I think it certainly could be questioned whether legislators should be simultaneously dealing with the same thing that the judiciary is.

The Chair: That is not a problem. As I said, I will take it under advisement and we might want to deal with this at the appropriate time. I was reacting more to the time line with summer, which was mentioned by Richard. I think that before that time line we have to work that sort of thing—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am basically saying that the steering committee has to look at this before we finish this set of hearings and make a determination as to what the parameters should be. We often use “sub judice”—I want to be clear about this—very broadly. I do not think those restrictions really exist as broadly in legislative terms as we sometimes allow them to because it is easier for us to get off the hook. I am not sure our canvassing of opinion on understanding—for instance, on this latest court appeal, I thought it was very much a tactical approach. “Let’s have some meaningful consultation, let’s move to the amendments or we are going to appeal” is the way it was really being presented. If, after the fact, we cannot then look at those matters and, having had these judicial decisions, say, for instance, “They should be dealt with outside of the courts and these are means of dealing with them outside of the courts,” I think we would be missing our job as a committee looking at education at this stage.

The Chair: Okay. We will take it then that we will discuss that as an item on the steering committee agenda. We will deal with that in due course, keeping in mind what everybody has said.

Moving on to the business at hand, I wish to welcome the Ministry of Education officials, school business and finance branch, Walter Wasyliko and Theo Grootenboer. If you could introduce yourselves and your topic, the floor is yours.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Mr Wasylo: I am Walter Wasylo and I will be talking about operating funding of early childhood education.

Right now, under the general legislative grant program, junior and senior kindergarten are funded in the same manner as all other elementary schoolchildren. For grant purposes, kindergarten enrolments are funded on the basis of a half-day program. School boards now do not receive funding for full-day kindergarten programs. The ministry does not provide operating funds for day care programs.

As you are probably aware, elementary school funding is based on five categories. The first three categories are the basic per-pupil block grants, the second one is the board-specific grants, the third category is special initiative funding and the fourth category is capital grants. JK and SK pupils qualify for all those programs.

The kindergarten initiatives that were announced in the 1989 throne speech will extend the half-day JK programs to all school boards and will provide a full-day SK program where the classroom space is going to be available. These initiatives will be starting as of September 1990 and will be phased in over a five-year term.

The full cost of these at full implementation will be up to \$194 million. The amount of funding in each of these five years will be phased in depending on how school boards implement these plans. School boards that introduce half-day JK programs will receive the same funding as other boards that already have JK. Where school boards have the classroom space available and decide to come in with a full-day SK program, they will receive funding on a full-day basis.

Mr J. M. Johnson: You mentioned "where the schools have the space available." In many of the schools they have portables. Could they not then put portables in place to make the space available?

Mr Wasylo: I believe that they would be able to, yes.

Mr J. M. Johnson: They will be able to facilitate the portables for the sake of the junior and senior kindergartens?

Mr Wasylo: Yes, whatever way they deem fit for their own purposes.

Mr J. M. Johnson: And the grants will be available?

Mr Wasylo: We have here Theo Grootenboer who will talk about capital funding. But now only JK spaces will be funded.

Mrs O'Neill: You are suggesting September 1990 is when we will be funding the program for a half-day. We are doing that now. You said September 1990, and that confused me because then you said it would be phased in over five years. I thought that there were two dates we were working with: one was 1992 and one was 1994. I am getting quite a few questions on this, as I presume other members are too. I thought that 1994 was the date by which the mandatory had to be in place. Is that correct?

Mr Wasylo: Right, but they have five years in order to phase it in.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you saying that September 1990 is the date when we would be doing a full-day senior kindergarten?

Mr Wasylo: No, when we will start the actual phase-in. Those boards that do not have a JK program now will start as of September 1990. They can phase their JK program in as of that date.

Mrs O'Neill: But they will have two years to phase in. What I do not understand is that we know that over half the boards in the province have this already. So I do not know what the significance of September 1990 is. What I think is more significant is what date they have to have it in place by. I guess I just do not understand what you want to do in September 1990 that is different from what you did in 1989.

1430

Mr Wasylo: If a board chooses to bring that program in, we will start funding it as of that date.

Mrs O'Neill: Even if they do not have the program?

Mr Wasylo: What do you mean?

Mrs O'Neill: Do you see what my question is? Can you understand what I am having trouble with?

Mr Wasylo: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Tell me the date they have to have it in by and what you are going to do up to this point.

Mr Wasylo: They have to offer it by September 1992.

Mrs O'Neill: That is what I thought.

Mr Wasylo: That is going to become mandatory.

Mrs O'Neill: Right.

Mr Wasylo: But we will start funding it if they choose to provide it before that date.

Mrs O'Neill: But that is not news. That is what is happening now, that is what would happen if this throne speech had never been read.

Mr Wasylo: That is right, but they will have to phase it in in terms of space.

Mr Keyes: Reconfirmation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Don't attack the government; it is unseemly.

Mrs O'Neill: People out there are having trouble with this, there are educators having trouble with this. I want to get the facts for them once and for all if we can get them on this particular. I know I can only get one item a day and this may be the item for today.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am going to join you later on.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay.

The Chair: I do not know how this education committee is going, but this certainly adds a different parameter to the whole education process.

Ms Poole: There's been no change.

Mr Keyes: It's been working like this for three years.

The Chair: So it's nothing new? I see.

Mrs O'Neill: The full day—does that mean that by 1994 they will have had to make up their minds, because the date 1994 floats out there too in reference to this.

Mr Wasylo: Yes, they will have to provide a full-day senior kindergarten program. It will be optional for the parents to send their children, but the board will have to offer it by that date.

Mrs O'Neill: If they have space available, they have to have it in place by 1994. Who determines whether they have space available?

Mr Wasylo: The board itself.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess the other thing is that they do not have to make a choice between these. They can offer both of these for half a day. They could also offer a half-day five-year-old and a full-day five-year-old. One board could offer both of those programs?

Mr Wasylo: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: I think I have got all the questions for now.

Mr Jackson: Just to follow up, they would get funded at the same rate or at different rates depending upon whether they had a full-day or a half-day senior kindergarten program?

Mr Wasylo: I am sorry, I do not understand the question.

Mr Jackson: If currently a half-day program is funded at half the daily rate per child because they are in school only half a day, will you fund the full-day rate for full-day kindergarten for those students identified at a half-day rate?

Mr Wasylo: Yes.

Mr Jackson: When will you start doing that?

Mr Wasylo: When they have the full-day program.

Mr Jackson: Offered?

Mr Wasylo: Yes, they will get the full-day claim.

Mr Jackson: Actually as early as when?

Mr Wasylo: As of September 1990.

Mrs O'Neill: They can do it in 1990?

Mr Wasylo: That is if they have space.

The Chair: Supplementary, Ms Poole.

Ms Poole: As a supplementary to what Mr Jackson was asking—

Mr Jackson: I am not ready.

The Chair: Oh, excuse me. I am sorry.

Ms Poole: I am sorry.

Mr Jackson: No, keep going. If you have a supplementary, go right ahead. I just have—

The Chair: I will come back to you, Cam.

Ms Poole: Concerning the full-day senior kindergarten, basically what I am hearing you say is that you would fund that by September 1990 if the board determines that it has space available.

Mr Wasylo: That is correct.

Ms Poole: So if a board could bring in a portable and say it therefore has space available, even in Metro in a situation where we may or may not be in a negative grant situation, and certainly not much in the way of provincial funds is going into Metro, even in that situation you would then fund that full-day senior kindergarten?

Mr Wasylo: Well, it would be under the regular general legislative grant plan. But they would be counted in their enrolment as full-day and they would be eligible for full-day funding.

Ms Poole: So this is not going to be treated as a special initiative grant or anything separate where Metro could get funds?

Mr Wasylo: No, it will be part of the normal GLG.

Mr Jackson: How do you arrive at the figure of \$194 million?

Mr Wasylo: That was a preliminary estimate, on projected enrolments.

Mr Jackson: Did either of you gentlemen participate in building up those numbers at the time?

Mr Wasylo: In a peripheral way.

Mr Jackson: What kinds of things did you analyse in the process of arriving at that figure? Could you expand on that?

Mr Wasylo: We were looking at the number of pupils of JK age who were not enrolled. We took the population of four-year-olds and we took those who had been enrolled in schools and did some projections of how many children the numbers—

Mr Jackson: That would be the numbers of students. Let's talk about the costing. What costing numbers did you look at, the per-pupil costing numbers?

Mr Wasylo: We were looking at the actual grant ceilings, of about \$3,200, and other costs that would be associated; for example, pupil transportation.

Mr Jackson: How much of the \$194 million is other things, including transportation? Were there other things?

Mr Wasylo: There would be other operating costs.

Mr Jackson: Such as?

Mr Wasylo: Such as special education and other things that boards would be eligible for.

Mr Jackson: How much of the \$194 million is a per-pupil grant and how much of it is transportation and how much of it is special ed? Were you able to break that down?

Mr Wasylo: I do not have those breakdowns.

Mr Jackson: You would have those available to us, in terms of your preliminary figures?

Mr Wasylo: I would have to check back as to what information would be available.

Mr Jackson: Just a general basic comprehension question to help me understand this better: Was it in your capacity in the finance branch to look at a specific program in terms of the average costs before the elementary panel or were you focused on the specific cost for the primary division, which this program falls in?

Mr Wasylo: We were assuming just the average cost that is approved for an elementary pupil, not specifically primary grades.

Mr Jackson: Given your knowledge of the differential costs within the elementary panel, is it your understanding that the cost of delivery of

this program is greater than or less than the average cost in elementary?

Mr Wasylo: I assume that it would be a bit higher because of those class sizes, which are lower.

Mr Jackson: Was there any discussion about that factor in terms of the number crunching?

Mr Wasylo: Was that taken into account?

Mr Jackson: In terms of your originally working up the—

Mr Wasylo: The class sizes were taken into account.

Mr Jackson: That would be on the capital side, and we are going to get to Theo in a moment, but I am more concerned about the per-pupil grant in terms of how sensitive the numbers were. You took the average. Was that the specific instruction in terms of arriving at a number, or were your instructions to take into account the increased program costs or the delivery costs within the average price of—

Mr Wasylo: Since we fund them the same way as all other elementary grades, we took that overall average.

Mr Jackson: Really I am trying to find out the mindset within the finance branch in terms of how it looks at pricing out a program initiative within the ministry and its impact on school boards. That is essentially where I am coming from in this. I talked to the minister responsible for day care at the time, Mr Sweeney, and his understanding of how the government was approaching this, but I have never really had the opportunity to talk with your branch in terms of how you worked up the numbers.

It is safe to say then that by treating it as an average number, it is clear that the impact of this decision will have a greater impact on school board budgets by providing a program with funding that is at the average rate than it would if it were provided on the actual program costs?

1440

Mr Wasylo: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that is an important point. I really would like to know what the difference would be and I wonder if some number crunching could be done on that for us.

Mr Wasylo: Specifically for those junior grades?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, just presuming that you would use the class-size goals of the government for grades 1 and 2 at this stage as your numbers rather than the average cost per

student in the elementary panel. Is there any way you could do that for us?

Mr Wasylo: I do not believe that we have those numbers available.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it impossible to do that kind of thing?

Mr Wasylo: Yes, it is, because we do not have access to those numbers by grade.

Mr Jackson: You do not?

Mr Wasylo: No, because we do not receive those financial figures by grade.

Mr Jackson: But you do for special ed.

Mr Wasylo: We receive them for special ed alone, but not by grade.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Perhaps we can come back to this later on. It sounded almost sort of catch-22ish, and I know it cannot be the case that we would set up something which would be like that. I just want to get somebody to clarify it. You basically said that senior kindergarten boards which have the space will be expected to provide senior kindergarten but the boards get to decide whether or not they have the space. I think that is what you are saying, is it not?

Mr Wasylo: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What are the parameters for their making those decisions? In other words, some examples of portables have been raised already, but there can be boards which can decide, one would presume, that an extra portable on the site would be too much, etc: "We don't have space and we don't want to take the extra cost of putting on a portable"—we will find out about the capital implications in a minute—"and therefore we do not have space available." Does that mean that they will have no obligation to provide senior kindergarten for the future? What are the parameters? I just need to know.

Mr Grootenboer: The parameters for making that decision rest with the school board. The school board is accountable to its ratepayers. If they decide to put in a full-day senior kindergarten program, that is something that they do within their own policies, and the way they set them is up to them. From the capital side, we are not looking at the provision of senior kindergarten spaces as a priority.

Mr Jackson: You are not?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is what we understood in the original announcements on this, of course, that there would be no capital money available for this, although there would be for JK.

Mr Grootenboer: That is correct.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is another thing I should be not throwing back at those people who are trying to work out the financial sides of all of this. Rather, in terms of the government and the policymakers, this is saying to me that full-day senior kindergarten is not as important to the government as is half-day junior kindergarten being available across the province. Am I wrong about that? That is my interpretation of what is being said here.

Mr Grootenboer: I would interpret it differently. I would say that the senior kindergarten is an initiative that the government is promoting where space permits. Because there are some boards or some jurisdictions that do not have the space available to accommodate the full-day program, that should not stop those boards that have it from implementing it if they want to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I still do not understand what this means. Are there some terms, other than its own accountability to its local electorate, upon which a board can arbitrarily determine that it has no space when it has space? Is this just some sort of philosophical question about trees falling and being unheard, or is this real? I wonder where this goes as an initiative. Are boards that do not want to do senior kindergarten and that may have space available, is all they have to do is say they have no space available and basically stonewall their local citizenry on that when people come and ask for that? Is that basically where it is in terms of senior kindergarten? If that is the case, it is not much of an initiative. If that is the case, we are not saying very much about what we think about full-day senior kindergarten, it seems to me.

Mr Grootenboer: I think there are a significant number of school boards that do have space and would perhaps like to offer that program.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is the reverse of what I am saying. I am talking more about a parental right. An expectation is being raised in the public that senior kindergarten is a good thing. It was announced in the throne speech as something the government was going to put money into now, etc, and then it has this little caveat: no money for capital where space is available. Now I am hearing today that the government is not going to have anything to say about whether or not there is space available, it is all going to be left up to the local board.

I am not at this stage going to come at it from the positive side of those boards that progressively want to say that senior kindergarten is a good

thing and, "We want to go after it and we've got the space," or, "We'll make the space," either of those two things; but what about the other side, which is that a public board may just decide that it does not want to proceed on this matter at all? Where does that leave the parents? Do they have to fight it out at the local board level or is this government going to give it some assistance?

Again, this is not something I should be asking you; it is something more for the policymakers, I guess. I just find that the message is a mixed message. It sounds as if on one hand we are encouraging us to go forward and on the other hand we are allowing, in a very unaccountable way, a decision to just not proceed at all, whereas we are not doing that with junior kindergarten. We are basically saying that junior kindergarten is on for the province.

Mr Grootenboer: That is correct.

The Chair: Cam had a supplementary.

Mr Jackson: Yes. The supplementary had to do with this notion of leaving the school boards to determine the need and space availability. What if a board were to proceed aggressively to provide the program and shifted its space needs internally to put less pressure in the junior kindergarten area and a tremendous amount on program in some other area?

Let me put it this way: I get a sense that you lose a certain degree of accountability when you are at that arm's length as a government that holds the carrot of funding. But having been a trustee for 10 years, I have yet to find a regulation that involves money that there is not some loopholes in. To what extent are you measuring the degree to which boards may be putting themselves in awkward positions by aggressively promoting this program but putting incredible pressure on other grade levels and then in turn coming to the government with a frontal attack on the crisis that they are demonstrating in certain program areas?

Mr Grootenboer: That is a good question. The whole thrust of the junior kindergarten-senior kindergarten initiative in terms of the space and its ramifications for school boards is not fully understood because the school boards have not yet responded to the request that we sent out to them in October. Well, they have responded, but we have not analysed and collated that information yet, which is the multi-year capital expenditure forecasts of school boards.

On that document we are asking, among other things, what their plans are in this regard with respect to both the junior kindergarten and the senior kindergarten initiative. Until we have had

a chance to analyse in a total way, it is very difficult to determine what we may or may not be doing with respect to this initiative as the years go on. It is not possible to analyse that at this time. We have asked the question and we are proposing—if you would allow me, I would like to go through the piece that I had prepared and then maybe—

Mr Jackson: I would appreciate that as well.

The Chair: I have allowed a little bit of flexibility in this to get at it, and I think we can relate those capital questions when we deal with that, but I do have two more questions. We can deal with those and then we will go to your report right away.

Mrs O'Neill: Mine is more of a comment. I think, Richard, if you look back at the history of boards that have made representation over the years to have full-day kindergarten, it has been more the inner-city boards that see a need, and most of those boards in this province do have space.

The second thing is that what I hope is happening—it certainly is happening in my area—is that boards are being asked more and more to consult with their own communities regarding what programs should be highlighted. There no doubt will be part of this senior kindergarten. I would suggest, and I hope I am right, that if there is not good consultation, the ministry, certainly through its regional offices, will monitor that, especially if it gets parental feedback that this is not happening or there is representation and it is not being responded to.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I will just respond that I find it difficult to understand the difference between the government's approaching junior kindergarten in that fashion and senior kindergarten. In junior kindergarten it is not saying anything about consultation or need or anything; it is basically saying, "This will be done." In senior kindergarten, it is supposedly saying you like this, because you are going to make money available, but it is doing it on a limited kind of basis and it is requesting the kind of input you are talking about. I find those very mixed messages.

I have never seen any pedagogical basis for this. This is not what we should go after you about; we should go after people tomorrow about this. But I have never understood what the pedagogical reason is for doing it the way it is being done. I understand the political reasons just fine; I do not understand the pedagogical reasons.

Mrs O'Neill: I think it is like pupil-teacher ratio. It is very difficult to get hard data on this. It is often what people want, think they like or feel comfortable with.

Mr Jackson: The point is you made one reference to a catch-22 and it strikes me that we have a further catch-22, in so far as your mandate at junior kindergarten is concerned, which further limits a trustee's and a board's right to look at the availability generally of expanding full-day senior kindergarten programs. You have got them pulling on each other in terms of outcome. So all the consultation in the world is going to lead to the same conclusion, "What limited spaces we have are reserved for the mandatory implementation of junior kindergarten, half-day." It is just the very awkward way it is constructed.

Mrs O'Neill: That is not every board across the province.

Mr Jackson: It is in my board, Yvonne, and that is an important board.

The Chair: I assumed that was not your second question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A response.

The Chair: You were responding. If we could deal with that, we will get to the other half of the show here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Some of these questions may be better for tomorrow, but the one I will ask now is, the difficulty I can see with some boards and this expectation that is being raised is that in some parts of the boards space will be available and in other parts of the boards it will not. I can think of some of the growth boards especially. There will be a lot of boards where that would be the case, whether they are rural, inner-city or whatever. Are there any guidelines being developed about where things must be offered in terms of junior kindergarten?

All I have ever heard is that a board must offer junior kindergarten. It does not say that if it is in one school, it has got to be throughout their jurisdiction. It does not say any of that kind of thing. I am wondering whether, since that first announcement, any more thought has been given to that or whether that again has been left up to the board's own internal politics to deal with.

Mr Grootenboer: The Ministry of Education's capital grant plan, which deals with design guidelines that are used in the approval of funds for school projects, includes kindergarten space as a special space. It has specific design parameters within it, and those include a separate entrance, a separate washroom, a place for coats

and a slightly larger area than a regular classroom. But that is not to say that some school boards do not or cannot offer those programs in other classrooms. To answer your question, there are separate guidelines available for kindergarten. It would be the same kind of facility.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess what I was saying—I was not making myself clear—is that a growth board has all its schools in its growth area with portables all over and there is no room for recess, let alone extra classroom space, and in the old established part of the community it has lots of space available and could in fact bring in junior kindergarten very easily. I have not ever heard it developed further by the government as to what its expectations on mandatory offering of junior kindergarten are. Is it that the board in some place, in one school or in X number of schools in its jurisdiction, must provide it by 1992 or is it that it must provide it in a systematic way to residents who wish it, no matter where they are living? I have never seen any guidelines or any discussion about that very real problem for a number of boards.

Mr Grootenboer: It would be our expectation that, with the receipt of the capital expenditure forecasts the school boards have filled out and the analysis of those, we will be able to determine how that will work in an orderly fashion. We do have a budget of some \$100 million to address those capital requirements, and that would be capital requirements in the situation which you have described.

Mr Jackson: But you are also figuring in transportation. I remember that when our board implemented junior kindergarten we did French immersion in grade 1. When we implemented it we did it on a satellite basis, and there was a lot of controversy because we did not provide busing and families had to drive their child halfway across town and separate him from his brother and sister. There is an analogy to Mr Johnston's question, and I think it is worth pursuing. Is the government saying that it will leave that entirely up to school boards, whether they start busing the brother to junior kindergarten and then the sister gets to go to grade 1 in a different school? This is really the nub of Richard's question. I have had that practical problem because I come from a community that has this problem now and did 10 years ago.

Mr Grootenboer: I was not suggesting that the school boards would offer junior kindergarten in one part of their system and not in another. I expect that they would want to plan and phase that in so that they can meet the needs of their

community. For that purpose we do have funds available, to allow them to plan the creation of spaces in existing schools, as well as new schools, for the JK.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In looking at the JK, the mandatory nature of things and the demand that would come from their parents to have junior kindergarten close to home—clearly, because they would not want those kids bused, they would want them near home as much as possible—the difficulty that one school board in particular raised with me is the problem that, because of the overdemand that was already there for its schools, the only option it was now looking at was to take advantage of your money to change classrooms around to be suitable for junior kindergarten kids and to move all the grade 8s out and have them shipped for their last year down to the south end of the jurisdiction where it had space. I guess that is solving one problem, but it is creating another. I just wondered if there had been more guidelines and thought developed around that. I can think of York region, Peel region and Durham—

Mr Jackson: And Halton.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —and Halton, where that would be a major factor. It is a very difficult decision for boards to make, in terms of all of a sudden plucking out the senior kids because they are easier to transport, so that you can make use of the money to get appropriate locations for your junior kindergartens because you would not want your junior kindergartens to be in classrooms that were designed for slightly bigger kids, for all the really good reasons why we have different capital expectations there.

The Chair: In Sudbury my son gets shipped right across town right now. He has been transported ever since he was in kindergarten, he has been on a bus all his life.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Grootenboer said something about \$100 million. Is that for this whole, total program over five years?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: For all boards in this province. And that is to be divvied out over five years?

Mr Grootenboer: That is for the JK initiative, yes.

The Chair: To be fair, Mr Grootenboer, could you proceed at this point into your capital presentation? Then we will allow the other questions. You are getting sort of a fragmented thing and I want to get it organized in here.

Mr Jackson: Ah, we are getting to the truth, Mr Chairman.

Mr Grootenboer: I have just a few words to say about junior kindergarten and then perhaps some more substantive things to say about child care centres. Those are also facilities that we fund under the capital program, and they belong, I believe, in early childhood education because they are in schools now.

With respect to the junior kindergarten initiative, the 1989 Ontario budget announced that \$100 million would be available for capital projects over the next five-year period. In 1989 the Ministry of Education provided additional allocation, to those school boards which had been allocated new schools and additions in April and which were not offering JK programs in the amount of \$200,000 per project, to augment the project size to facilitate JK space.

The second thing is the multi-year capital expenditure forecast which has been sent out to school boards. The information is currently in regional offices. We are collating it and getting it all together. We have asked on the forecast what are the school boards' plans with respect to the junior kindergarten initiative and how can we plan the implementation of the spaces required for the time period. Until we have a chance to analyse and come to grips with the different requests, because there are different levels of enrolment and capacity in the system, it will not be possible to make a final determination of how that money will be disposed of. But there is a five-year implementation period and the budget is for \$20 million per year over that period. That is junior kindergarten.

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Child care: This initiative started in 1987. At that time the throne speech announced that all new schools would be required to include a child care centre as part of the facility. Since that time the ministry has made allocations to school boards for some 200 child care centres at a total cost of \$59.8 million. Facilities are designed in accordance with the Day Nurseries Act guidelines. The split of the 200, to date, is 161 in elementary schools and 39 in secondary schools. The size at the elementary level is 2,350 square feet and at the secondary level it is up to 4,500 square feet. We estimate the capacity for child care for school-aged children for the elementary facility to be approximately 25 and for the secondary to be approximately 50.

The actual built capacity of a child care centre varies based on local needs and is identified by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This has been a combined initiative because the Ministry of Community and Social Services

assists in the initial implementation and initial capital costs of equipping the facilities at the front end.

I have a breakdown of how these go by year, if you are interested. These are as funded, not necessarily as announced. There is a mix. I go from 1988 to 1992. In 1988, we had 40 facilities and about \$10.5 million; in 1989, there were 57 for \$16.6 million; in 1990, there were 40 for \$11.4 million; in 1991, there are 28 facilities and there is \$10.8 million budgeted for that; in 1992, there are 35 and we believe that the budget for that will be \$10.2 million.

That is the information that I prepared for the committee. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr Jackson: Will that be shared in print form, the presentation?

The Chair: I expect it will be. You could share that with us in print form so that we can have an opportunity to look at it and deliberate over it. In case there are other questions, we would come back at a future date.

Mr Grootenboer: Sure.

The Chair: I would like to start off with a question. Obviously the ministry, when it made its decision, decided on new schools versus old schools; that is, new schools being constructed would have the day care facility and older schools would not be eligible for that. Is that correct?

Mr Grootenboer: That is correct.

The Chair: Do you have information as to how you reached that conclusion and what parameters you took into account as you made the decision?

Mr Grootenboer: The throne speech initially said new schools. Subsequent to that the definition was revised to include renovations or something that looks like a new school, that would be considered to be a new school.

Mr Jackson: Talks like a new school and walks like a new school.

Mr Grootenboer: Well, a complete renewal of the facility has also been included as a new school. It did not come out that way originally, but over two years or three years it has become the policy. Now it is strictly new schools.

The Chair: But did you have information to make that determination as to why you would cut off, say, an inner-city school that might need the facility more for keeping the adult students, single mothers in most cases, in school? That might be a factor that would help them stay in

school, if they had day care in the building, using Comsoc's rationale for—

Mr Grootenboer: We had information that a number of school boards were offering surplus space for use as child care centres. There were several hundred of those. I am not sure of the exact number; 600 sticks in my head. But the actual reason for choosing only new schools, I think, relates to economics. If we did it on the basis of a need kind of calculation, we probably would find that there would not be enough child care space for school-aged children. You would find you could spend a considerable amount of money just to satisfy that particular need. So the economics of building a child care facility in a new facility are clearly more practical than if you are dealing with an existing facility in an inner-city situation where you have to make an addition of a small amount. If there is surplus space it is different, of course, but we are not—

The Chair: Are you saying that if, say, a secondary school in the inner city had surplus space and it renovated, it would qualify? Is that what you are saying?

Mr Grootenboer: No. If they would make the surplus space available to an operator, then the operator potentially could renovate it and use it for child care space.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Directed through Comsoc.

Mr Grootenboer: Directed through Comsoc. In fact, the initiative in the new schools is also predicated on the fact that the centres are operated by a nonprofit organization. The Ministry of Community and Social Services is involved in that.

The Chair: According to their guidelines and all of that.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: You have given us quite a bit of information very succinctly. On the \$200,000 per project, did I hear you correctly? It was starting in September 1989, all the projects approved from then on?

Mr Grootenboer: No, the projects approved in April 1989 that would be for funding in 1990, 1991 and 1992; that is, future years' funding. We are precommitting our capital program to 1992.

Mrs O'Neill: So if it is \$20 million per year, and I presume that is the approval year, you are saying about 100 projects per year across the province. Math is not one of my strong points.

Mr Grootenboer: No, not necessarily, because the ones we chose for additional allocation

were based on the fact that these boards were not providing junior kindergarten. You have the situation, as you pointed out before, that school boards can provide JK and have been doing so for a number of years, but not all of them are.

Mrs O'Neill: No.

Mr Grootenboer: But now we have said, "You are going to be required to provide it in your jurisdiction." So we went to look at the school boards that were not providing JK and did have an allocation for a new school, and we thought that they would immediately need an additional space in their school to allow them to offer JK at the time.

Mrs O'Neill: You were kind of speeding up their decision to get on the bandwagon with every new project?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: So this was not a blanket, that every new project—

Mr Grootenboer: No, it was selected on the basis of those that were not offering JK prior to 1989.

Mrs O'Neill: So the \$100 million is already starting to be spent, you are telling me.

Mr Grootenboer: It is starting to be allocated, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: To the child care centres. I am not sure I have got all these correct. You say the capacity in the ones that are connected with elementary schools is basically 25—

Mr Grootenboer: That is what we estimate, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: —and in the secondary 50. Have you been keeping statistics about how those spaces have been picked up vis-à-vis subsidized spaces?

Mr Grootenboer: No, I have no information on that.

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Mrs O'Neill: Will you be doing that? As I understand it, some of these spaces, or should I say facilities, are not being used to their capacity, in fact are very much under capacity, simply because the municipality has not been allocated or in some way designated the subsidized spaces for those particular locations. I guess what I am getting at is that some of these, I consider, very good day care facilities are being very much underutilized because there has not been enough—whatever you want to call it—negotiations, co-ordination or whatever.

Mr Grootenboer: There would only be a few of those actually in use at this point in time. The

announcement was in 1987, so the money started to flow in 1988 and the construction would have occurred. But that is an interesting point. We would be happy to look into that and we will.

Mrs O'Neill: I think it is useful to do. I think that is all for now.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Let me see if I understand or not. Are you saying that the average cost to add a kindergarten facility is \$200,000?

Mr Grootenboer: That is our estimate of the add-on cost of doing a junior kindergarten facility on an existing school.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On an existing school?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, as you are building it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is there much difference between that and a new school? That is for a new school here?

Mr Grootenboer: That is for a new school, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: And what about retrofitting old schools?

Mr Grootenboer: If you are dealing with an existing space, that could be significantly lower.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Have you done any projections about just what the \$100 million will buy in terms of old school/new school kinds of things? I am just trying to get some idea of what potentially would be in place by the end of this period, the largest number and the smallest number.

Mr Grootenboer: We did some really rough figures when we put the original \$100 million together. It was based on an average costing of some \$8,000 per space, per JK. That \$8,000 takes into account an average for renovation or retrofitting at a lower figure than new schools. We said we thought maybe half would be new and half would be retrofitted.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do we presume that when we are putting in a kindergarten we are also going to be putting in a day care centre? If we are going to half-day kindergarten, and in some of these schools you may be on shifts where you have got a half-day in the afternoon and a half-day in the morning, with two different groups of kids, one would presume; it is quite possible it is one of the growth areas—are we talking about having a day care centre on site as well?

Mr Grootenboer: If it is a new school, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Only if it is a new school, but we are now talking about a mandatory program of JK for all the boards in the province. Most of them have their existing stock of schools

and they are going to add JK into that building somehow with assistance. Are we thinking that you need a day care to be there as well as a JK, or are we thinking about that space only being used for half the day for kindergarten and some will be turned into day care space in the afternoon or something? How are we seeing that work? The realities are, again, that separate support of a day care is obviously very important to a JK half-day plan working fairly well.

Mr Grootenboer: I would see that there would be both a JK and a child care facility in a new school.

Mrs O'Neill: Is the child care mandatory still?

Mr Grootenboer: On new schools?

Mrs O'Neill: For each project.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But it is not for the existing ones. I guess I am having difficulty with the notion of how we are going to deal with that existing stock and the real needs of child care in that locality. If there is lots of good, proper care in the area and lots of subsidized space and stuff, that is great. But if it is not, it does not sound like we have thought that through far enough in terms of what the capital needs are going to be of retrofitting a lot of schools and the child care supplementary assistance that would be needed. But we will get on to that with other people tomorrow and see what we can find out.

Looking at these figures that you just gave us, which I find fascinating, 39 secondary schools will have received money by 1992 to have child care. Am I right?

Mr Grootenboer: Correct, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How many secondary schools in the province will have child care by 1992? Do you know that?

Mr Grootenboer: I could not tell you. There are probably a number that have child care in schools right now. I do not have those figures.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The reason I am asking is that if the people who are coming tomorrow know about what services are out there and can look this up, I would be interested to know it. If you look at these figures, even on the elementary numbers you have 161, which is less than the number of boards that we have, and only 40, approximately, of the secondary schools. God knows how many of them had day care centres before that. A very small number, I would imagine, but I do not know. I am just wondering how many boards, after this process is finished, will not even have child care facilities on the

secondary level or will have only one elementary school or whatever in their jurisdiction that has child care. I wonder if somebody has that information for us just to look at.

Mr Grootenboer: No, I do not have the detailed information on what is in existing schools, but I could tell you that the initiative for placing child care centres in new schools is providing child care in areas where it is probably the most needed; that is, in newly developing areas where there are very few facilities, in terms of community use, that can actually be utilized for that purpose.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not know if you have done much of a study on what is available in nonprofit child care these days anywhere in the province, but I would suggest to you that it is relatively semantic to say that the need is much greater in some of the newer communities. In some of the old existing communities, like my own, getting yourself child care is a very difficult thing to do.

Mrs O'Neill: Could we not get those figures of the boards that are either renting space or have got this—

Mr Grootenboer: I believe that is available. I do not have it myself, but I think it is available.

Mrs O'Neill: I know those surveys have been taken of the boards.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be really interested to see it, because I know some boards have gone massively in this direction, and if these are the only numbers we have for new ones, I just wonder what the spread is like in the province. Again, especially if we are going to then move to a mandatory program of JK, I am thinking about some of the extra supports to that system that are useful with a child care centre. I would be interested in getting it.

Do I understand from the last thing—

The Chair: Could I interrupt for a second? I would appreciate it, because there are a number of speakers who are speaking, if we can keep it to one speaker unless you are dealing with a supplementary, so that we can move on. I am just reminding all of the committee to try to make the chair's job easier.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I also find it useful to have other people jumping in myself. It gives me a second to remember what I was going to ask.

The Chair: Yes, I know, but let's try to keep it going here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You say basically the money is going to be allocated on a \$20-million-per-year basis. I am thinking about the timetable—I think that is what you said.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You are frowning.

Mr Grootenboer: No, I am not. You are talking about junior kindergarten?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, sorry. Going back to JK, you said that \$100 million was going to go \$20 million a year in budgetary terms. I am thinking about the onus on boards to start to participate, which is clearly there in terms of expectation, etc. I am wondering why there was not—or is there—some capacity to do much more front-end loading of that.

Mr Grootenboer: I think there is capacity, but that is the way the budget is set up at this time. Again, we just do not know enough about what the school boards are ready to do in this area. There could be a way to move money through sooner.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The similar sorts of things that we have been doing otherwise in terms of five-year plans and that type of thing?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was just thinking it would make sense to have that flexibility.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr Jackson: What is the first year for the \$100 million? What fiscal year starts the first \$20 million?

Mr Grootenboer: I believe it is 1991.

Mr Jackson: Are you currently looking at those proposals?

Mr Grootenboer: As I said at the outset, we have put out, I think, \$8.4 million for projects already, so we have made some decisions on that, but until we have the total plans in we will not know how it will be spread out.

Mr Jackson: Of the \$8.4 million, is this all retrofit or a new school site or mixed?

Mr Grootenboer: The \$8.4 million was all for new schools.

Mr Jackson: It is all new. Would you be able to provide us a list with the approvals to date?

Mr Grootenboer: Sure.

Mr Jackson: This is at the lower funding rate, is it not, the capital funding rate, the 15 per cent reduced—

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, that is correct.

Mrs O'Neill: I have a supplementary on that, if I may. The \$8.4 million is the \$200,000 initiative for the boards that did not have—

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Mr Grootenboer: Correct.

Mrs O'Neill: That is all that is?

Mr Grootenboer: That is right.

Mr Jackson: Some school boards are responding to create space by putting further programs into portables. Are you aware of that? It gets back to the point I raised earlier. Are you in any way examining the impact of putting more programs into a portable environment? Because it is putting more pressure on their capital needs, which have a higher priority than the priority that you are not yet funding fully. You are only at \$20 million a year and it is almost a year away.

Mr Grootenboer: Whether a board uses portables for accommodating its various programs is largely dependent upon its ability to respond to the enrolment pressures it is faced with from September to September, or indeed even throughout the year. We have always had the issue of providing the funds for portables, we have always had portables. It is really not possible to prevent a school board—and I do not know if we want to prevent a school—from doing that. Some boards buy portables without any grant support whatsoever and implement program initiatives of their own. We may have a view of their program that does not agree with their view of the program and they carry on with class size arrangements, for example, or PTR negotiations and they put in facilities as they see fit.

Mr Jackson: Is it possible for a junior kindergarten or a senior kindergarten program, half-day or full-day, to be delivered in a portable in Ontario?

Mr Grootenboer: Is it possible?

Mr Jackson: Is it permissible or is it possible?

Mr Grootenboer: I think it is possible. I do not think it may be desirable but I think it is possible.

Mr Jackson: The ministry would approve a junior kindergarten program in a portable? A better way of asking that would be, were any of your capital funds for portables?

Mr Grootenboer: It probably would go something like this: The school board would probably want to use space in the existing school for the junior kindergartens and move another class into a portable. Perhaps that is more of what would happen.

Mr Jackson: It would not get capital funding for that portable, would it?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, it would. I think it would.

Mr Jackson: That is the question I was asking. So of this \$100 million, some of it could go for portables.

Mr Grootenboer: Potentially.

Mr Jackson: Potentially? You have approved \$8.4 million of \$20 million. You are almost half-spent. Are you looking at proposals for them or not?

Mr Grootenboer: That \$8.4 million is total cost.

Mr Jackson: I thought that was approved capital to date. I am sorry.

Mr Grootenboer: You have to apply grant rating. Our grant rates—

Mr Jackson: That \$8.4 million is the total cost of the projects.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr Jackson: So you are looking at 75 per cent of that.

Mr Grootenboer: Or less, 60 per cent.

Mr Jackson: Just so we understand each other, it is possible for a school board to say, "We are prepared to proceed with junior kindergarten but we need portables in order to provide that," and therefore it will submit its proposals to put that program in a portable?

Mr Grootenboer: It is possible, I suppose.

Mr Jackson: You are getting better at this as we go along.

There are no restrictions on allowing that. When you referred earlier to the fact that these facilities are designed in accordance with the Day Nurseries Act, you were talking about day care centres.

Mr Grootenboer: Child care centres.

Mr Jackson: And child care centres cannot be put into portables.

Mr Grootenboer: I do not know if that is the case.

Mr Jackson: My understanding is they cannot.

Mr Grootenboer: It would depend. My understanding of the Day Nurseries Act guidelines and the ability of a facility to be used for child care is dependent largely upon the interpretation of the regional office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, how it utilizes space and what the pressures are.

Mr Jackson: We can get clarification on that point. I am asking you to go into an area that is close to, but a little bit outside of, your expertise.

I have more questions but I will yield to other members.

The Chair: For clarification, that is usually the case, that the Ministry of Community and Social Services standards are being used for whatever building, whether it is in a school or not. Is that your understanding?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, I believe that to be the case.

Ms Poole: Mr Chairman, I would like to go back for a follow-up on comments you and Mr Johnston made about the day care in existing schools and to Mr Grootenboer's comments about the speech from the throne, which pledged that day cares would be built in new schools, and that further policy revision that came later on which said it would also cover renovations. I would like to ask you about that particular point. What exactly do you mean by renovations?

Mr Grootenboer: We would interpret a renovation to be a major renewal of an existing facility so that you are spending probably about half or better of the replacement cost of the facility to renew it.

Ms Poole: My riding is an area where I think we have had maybe one school built in the last 40 to 50 years, so you are talking about pre-existing stock. We are not only at capacity in those schools right now; in a number of schools we are in a situation where there are portables. I have one in particular, John Ross Robertson Jr, which has been overcrowded for years. They finally have made it to the top of the capital allocations for the Toronto Board of Education. They have received approval to go ahead and build an addition to provide three more classrooms and a multipurpose room.

The reason this has some bearing on what has been said today is that the existing day care has to be wiped out in order to allow that addition to be built. In addition to the \$2 million to do the addition, they have estimated that it will cost \$200,000, which fits in nicely with your figures, to build on the new day care. The Toronto Board of Education cannot, under its mandate, build that day care. Construction is due to start in 1990, so if we have to go to Comsoc's waiting list and priority list, it is very unlikely it could be done at that time, and the Ministry of Education has said no, it is only for new schools.

My question to you is, if you have a school where you are going to be able to provide that day care for the same price as if it were a brand-new school, \$200,000, why will the Ministry of Education not step in and take that measure?

Mr Grootenboer: I guess the answer we have is that it is simply a matter of economics. We cannot entertain all of the projects that are being proposed to us. It would become very onerous on the capital budget of the ministry.

Ms Poole: Even in a situation where, as you earlier said, it will cost a lot more to add on to existing stock, but where you have a situation where it will not cost more? In fact, what will happen if it goes in Comsoc's line for approval and is built two or three years down the line is that it will probably cost double that, so the economy of scale is such that it should be done now. You do not see that this situation should fit?

Mr Grootenboer: The problem is the availability of funds. You are pointing out a very desirable situation that we simply cannot fund because there are not enough dollars to go around. It is a matter of available allocation.

Ms Poole: You do not see that situation changing in the next few years, that the Ministry of Education would take on more responsibility for capital for day care?

Mr Grootenboer: No, I do not see that changing.

The Chair: Could we clarify something? I think you hit on something that should be clarified. You said it was up to going up to the Comsoc level whether the spaces were available. I just want to clarify whether or not the board of education had any input into any of the Comsoc funding for the day care. If you approved the space in the facility, that is not dependent on whether Comsoc is going to fund a day care centre in that facility. In her case, you are wiping one out and creating one. Those dollars would already be there for an existing day care, would they not? It is not your decision. You are basically saying yes or no based on allowing the facility to be in a school system and funding has nothing to do with the dollars from Comsoc.

1530

Mr Grootenboer: No.

Ms Poole: To clarify, I am just talking about capital, not operating dollars.

The Chair: Okay. But so am I; that was the clarification.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want to go back to a couple of things, if we could. I have a combination question, for both of you actually, I guess, because it comes back to that first matter. Looking through the legislative research services documents reminded me of what that promise of JK was. It was not just that all boards will

provide; it was that every child shall have access to. That is right, that was the language of it. I guess that says to a board that it really does not have a choice about providing it in some areas of a board's jurisdiction and not in another. It is going to have to do it. Is that accurate?

Mr Grootenboer: That is accurate, but the space availability issue is in relation to the senior kindergarten.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Oh, I see, yes. But there is still a problem in terms of actual physical space for JK in some of our growth boards without moving out of the school itself the grade 8 students at least, and sometimes the grade 7 and 8 students, and starting to transport them. The board, in other words, will not have a choice in that, which is what I was asking about before. It is going to have to make virtually every school have a JK in it.

Mr Grootenboer: I would think so.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Even if that means disrupting in some cases, in growth boards, the grade 8s and other grades. That was what I was asking about before.

Eighty per cent of boards have JK and 60 per cent of the kids who are of JK age are in JK at the moment. I guess there are two ways of asking the question. Does the \$100 million guarantee that at the end of five years the 40 per cent of the kids who are not in JK and eligible at the moment, whatever those numbers are by 1994, do the capital figures make sure that they will have a space? Have we worked that out?

Mr Grootenboer: We think so, but you have got to remember that the kids who are eligible to go into JK may not necessarily go to JK. It is not an obligation on the parent to send the child. There is a choice there and there may not be an uptake on JK for a certain number. But we believe—

Mr R. F. Johnston: But your problem is the opposite one, though, is it not? Your problem is that you have got to provide the space as if they are going. In other words, you have got to make sure, as I am understanding it now, that virtually every elementary school in this province has the capacity to provide JK. Am I right?

Mr Grootenboer: Will have.

Mr R. F. Johnston: By 1994.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess what I am asking is, does the \$100 million do that?

Mr Grootenboer: We think so.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What have you based that on? That was what I was asking about before, about how many you thought you could actually retrofit and how many new schools could be handled under the \$100 million. If the guarantee is there under the throne speech, and you are saying you think so, what was it based on? How does that money break out? You must have worked this out.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, we did. We worked it out on the basis of providing additional capital spaces for some 40,000-odd kids potentially, but that would be at half-time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes. But, just working it out on that formula, is that not misleading in terms of what the reality is that you may face out there? I do not know. Looking at the 20 per cent of boards that are not participating—some of them are big boards at this point—and looking at the existing capital they have and their growth needs and that sort of thing, it could be more problematic, could it not, than just figuring out what spaces for 40,000 kids would cost if every school has to provide it?

Mr Grootenboer: That is true.

Mr Wasylko: But we have to first wait for the boards to give us their plans on how they see it going year by year, and we will do that analysis when we get those school board plans.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So the presumption at the moment is based on the arithmetical factoring of 40,000 spaces rather than what the reality may be there. We do not know what the difference will be and we will not know until we hear from the boards about what their actual needs are. Correct?

Mr Wasylko: That is right.

Mr O'Neill: Just to follow up for a second what Richard said, I do not know what his office is receiving, but I have had at least 25 people, parents, tell me that they will not participate in this program. They do not want anything to do with it. I think that it is all based on the board's plans and I presume there will be a lot of work they will have to do regarding surveys to see about what three- and four-year-olds are doing in their community.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do they not have a problem, though? I guess what I am saying is that the expectation is that all children will have access. Then boards really do run into difficulty if the community school does not provide space, even if it is a limited number of kids who are in that community school who want to go, rather than busing four-year-olds.

Mrs O'Neill: I agree, but I am just saying this program is not going to be for every kid in the province.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not deny that, but space has to be made available.

Mrs O'Neill: I had not really thought of the high profile that portables could take in this whole scenario. The thought just had not crossed my mind until today.

You were talking about boards that have approvals and do not have approval and they still proceed with portables. They have to have the approval for the portable, do they, but they do not necessarily get funded for it? I wanted to get that straight first. When a board makes applications, and some of them of course are requesting 20, 30, 40, 50 or 60 a year, do they get approvals for the portables but not necessarily the grants that go with them? Do you have a set of criteria guidelines now regarding those approvals?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, we do. Portables are approved at the regional offices based on the criteria that they utilize in examining the programs of the different requirements for the board. Some of the portables may in fact not be approved because they go beyond the criteria that the ministry is prepared to approve. That is the case with some boards. Therefore portables will get put on a particular system grant-approved and non-grant-approved. Both are possible.

Mrs O'Neill: With the non-grant-approved, though, you keep records that more or less keep how many numbers they have out there, because there is no ministry participation, basically, other than you say you make. I understand this year in my own area, and you know the board of which I speak, it made a very big public statement that it could not get the portables from the ministry even though it was tied in with the primary class size. They were saying that to accommodate the class size they would have to have this many portables but they really were not getting the ministry's support. They made quite a few headlines on that one. It died, as far as I know; I do not know how they solved it.

First of all, are the criteria upon which this is judged a public guideline that we could have access to, and will it have to change now that we have this whole new mix?

Mr Grootenboer: I think it will have to change to reflect the one-to-20, and the guidelines should reflect that. We are working on it.

Mrs O'Neill: Are the present guidelines public knowledge, or could you give us some guidelines upon which portables are granted?

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, we have some guideline information I can make available for you.

Mrs O'Neill: It would be helpful if you could provide that. As I say, portables now are going to take a much different focus or profile in boards' decisions, I would say.

The other thing I would like to say, and it may respond to Richard's questions about moving grade 8s, is that I am sure you are aware, as I am, that there are many boards looking at a whole totally different configuration of their grade structure and accommodating them, and it ties in with both of the throne initiatives of destreaming as well as primary. There seems to be some very fundamental thinking going on out there regarding how students are housed and grouped, and it will be very interesting to see how some of the communities respond.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree with that. I was just thinking that there is chicken-and-egg stuff here, cause and effect, which really makes me wonder about the way we plan things. Boards almost have to respond to those kinds of initiatives after the fact when the government launching initiatives has not really necessarily thought out all the ramifications.

Mrs O'Neill: And so comes forward the recommendation of our select committee about impact studies.

1540

The Chair: A number of members have asked about the actual school, and I love this term of "walks like, talks like a new school." I would like to get back to the issue of if you could get us information about specific schools that have already completed what they are going to be doing, particularly those schools that qualify under the renovations rather than the new school program, and see if that could be shared with the committee members so that they would have an idea about what this school looks like.

I think it would be helpful to some of us who represent areas that we feel are somewhat different from the ministry's philosophy of new schools needing them more than an older school area. It seems to me that the older school—in my riding it is an inner school—that would have a greater need to keep a number of different people in the school system if they had day care provided. Whether you buy the argument of whether Comsoc already has the space available, I certainly would like to see a high school that has such a facility in an older building rather than a brand new one, if that information is available. I do not mean for the whole committee to go out,

but perhaps some of us may be interested in taking a look at how that works.

We all know that some rules are interpreted in some ways that boards can get to deal with these issues, but I would certainly be interested, and I think other members have expressed an interest, in the kind of school you are talking about, plus other related programs. So if there is one that we could see, a list of those schools that have qualified and are under way, I think this committee would be interested.

Mrs O'Neill: Etobicoke has one.

Mr Grootenboer: Yes, the one that comes to mind is Etobicoke's Seventh Street Jr. It was a complete renewal.

The Chair: Okay. Are there further questions of the participants before us? I have one matter that I would like to deal with after this part of the meeting, so, Richard, if you have other questions—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes. One is just that I notice, again from legislative research, that the figures from the ministry are that there are 800 child care centres in schools in the province, 100 programs of which are in the city of Toronto. I would like, tomorrow if we can get it, to get more detail on that, just in terms of where they are—high school, elementary. Some of these obviously have more programs than one in one school, etc. It would just be interesting to know where they are across the province.

The other thing that I would like for tomorrow—again this is not the capital stuff, but just to give notice for it—is, as far as I know and again according to the stuff we have got from research, there are no standards established for student-staff ratios for kindergarten, senior or junior. I am wondering if there has been any work done on that recently, supposedly as a result of The Formative Years work, and these new initiatives because it seems to me one of the fundamental things we are going to have to come to grips with is the different rationales for particular class size in grades 1 and 2 as part of the primary division and now with the JK mandatory and senior kindergarten development and how that fits in with the staff-child ratios that we see in the child care centres in exactly the same institutions.

I think we really have to start to come to grips with how much sense does it make to have your eight-to-one ratio for your kindergarten-aged child care centre in the school and having 20-to-one possibly, or 25-to-one, with a kindergarten teacher in the morning with those kids and then the supposed custodial area is eight-to-one and maybe provides better potential for educa-

tion. I really think we need to get some thoughts there.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman, would that be available? That is a board policy decision. Would you have all of that information? Each of the boards has its own policy on staffing of kindergarten.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know. What I am trying to find out is if during The Formative Years stuff that is under way, because supposedly there is a review going on of The Formative Years package, there is anyone working on what the pedagogical rationale, or lack of rationale, is for not having standards for JK and SK when we now have it for grades 1 and 2, but not for grade 3, in terms of part of the primary division.

Mrs O'Neill: What difficult questions you ask, Mr Johnston.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It seems to me we might want to try to get hold of some sort of reasonable coherence about—

The Chair: I think there may be other than the two people who are present here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Oh yes, I am putting that forward for—

The Chair: I just want to clarify that there are others to come, whether it is tomorrow or next week.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just giving notice. You know how I love to give notice of things.

The Chair: I love the way you give notice. It keeps everything on track and makes my job easier.

Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr Wasylo and Mr Grootenboer.

Ms Poole: If you forget about it, somebody else will bring it up.

Mrs O'Neill: And you will have it in your hands.

The Chair: But it is always there, anyway.

I had said at the outset of the meeting that if there were any questions or comments about the agenda and the way it was set up, I as chair would appreciate knowing that. If you feel there are other suggestions, we can fit people in as we go along, but given the time lines, I feel we did very well in trying to start the ball rolling and fill in as we could. If you would think about it, we can deal with it first thing tomorrow morning.

The one order of business I have is it has been brought to my attention that we are a little short on the third report. My understanding was that the committee had agreed to a certain number of reports being available and I understand that

some people have felt that they would like to ask for more. We are going to look into that to see if, in the short term, we can deal with an extra number for some other people who are interested in this, to save you. It makes no sense to photocopy; it costs more to photocopy than if the printing is already done. So if you will bear with me, I will report back as to how we are dealing with that issue. I will get back to you on how we are going to do it this time and maybe suggest to the steering committee that we up the numbers, because the last two reports have been short, and we would like to revisit that with the concurrence of the committee.

Ms Poole: We did up the numbers on the last report, the second report, and I think that one we had sufficient of. The first one we were really—

Mrs O'Neill: There was not as much interest in that one as there is in this one.

The Chair: My understanding was that we were short, and we will try to deal with that quickly so that we do not deal in other policy areas but just deal with that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are two sides to this. One is the amount of demand on this; there has been a continual demand for the first one.

Mrs O'Neill: Exactly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have been photocopying that first one like crazy. The difficulty is this one is not short like the first one. Therefore, for those of us who are trying to meet those kinds of needs, we really could use quite a stack.

Mr Furlong: I already have more demand than I have copies.

The Chair: I appreciate the fact that this is the case, and if you could bear with me, we will try to work that out in the short term. Perhaps there is a longer-term comment about how we can deal with shortages that way.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We can talk about royalties later.

The Chair: If I can get concurrence from the committee that we proceed in that fashion, then we will try to get back to you as to how we do it without photocopying our brains out.

Mrs O'Neill: Did you say we were meeting on this agenda tomorrow morning?

The Chair: No, I am just asking for comments. If you have them now, that is fine, but I was looking more at starting out tomorrow morning if you have questions on the agenda. It will give you some time to look them over.

Mrs O'Neill: At 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Are we going to have our comments in

camera or do we want to just discuss openly what is on? There is one person in here who is saying that she is a private citizen. I have some difficulty with that; I do not think the person is a private citizen.

Mr Keyes: She may be a private citizen but she may also have another capacity.

The Chair: She may not be a formal stakeholder.

Okay, if you wish to deal with it in that fashion. I just felt if you had concerns about it, or additions or deletions, if you felt that was appropriate—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have one question about tomorrow, actually. I do not know Dr Doxey's role, but is it to do with the place in Ryerson that we are going to do or is she separate from that?

Clerk of the Committee: She is separate in a way. This was a name I got through the ministry. She is a professor, I think, of their early childhood education. The people we will be working with or seeing when we go to Ryerson include the acting director, and we will be seeing the actual class.

Mrs O'Neill: Are we getting transportation provided that day?

Clerk of the Committee: I was just going to order cabs for us that day.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We could walk.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, that is true.

Mr Keyes: It is a brisk walk.

Ms Poole: It would only be what, a 15- or 20-minute walk?

Interjection: Good for the lungs.

Clerk of the Committee: We will see what the weather is like, okay?

Ms Poole: Good point.

Mr Keyes: I was just wondering if you could tell us the distribution of the reports so that we do not start flogging them out to our school boards, etc, if every school board is getting them and other groups like municipal councils. Could you tell us that, either now or tomorrow, when we talk about it? Just so we know the distribution.

1550

The Chair: We do have have that information now, if you would like it. It might be helpful.

Clerk of the Committee: Basically, the report is going to the members of the Legislature and the people who appeared. We really do not have any other groups on our mailing list. We just have enough copies for the 85 different groups that made presentations.

Mr Keyes: I am sure that every school board, first of all, would be keenly interested in it.

Mrs O'Neill: What about the media in the areas outside Toronto? There were several areas of the province that were not represented this morning. In fact, it was very poorly attended by the media, if you really want to look at the media outside Toronto. They obviously are not here when the House is not sitting.

The Chair: Except that the news services were here. There may not have been the individual stations, but they do subscribe. I know radio news was on, because I have already had a quote back from my own local station. The problem is the television news. Jack Johnson reminded me that we dealt with that issue of how to get television signals out, and I think we are going to have to do it again, because I understand from other members that a number of television stations do not have a video feed, and that is difficult. But Canadian Press was there and the networks were all there.

It is difficult, but I know face-to-face reporting was outside. That is the nature of the business, I think, more than anything else. But I appreciate your comments. By the way, those will be discussed to try to make the facilities easier for out-of-town newspeople, because they do have difficulty related directly to—

Mr R F Johnston: We have in the past, with other documents that were in great demand, had extra copies prepared and sent to the government bookstore and had them available for sale.

The Chair: It is still there.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think we need a plan for having a lot more that would be available to the 178 boards. It seems to me that should just be automatically available.

The Chair: It will be for sale in the government bookstore Friday morning at a cost of \$4, I am told.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay.

Mr Furlong: I do not mind saying that it is for sale at the bookstore, but we are going to have enough copies to send to the school boards, whether they appeared before us or not. Is that so?

Mr Keyes: I think we should, but they are not, according to what they said. I do not think there would be enough for them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I second the motion by Mr Furlong.

Mr Furlong: Thank you very much, Mr Johnston.

Mr Miclash: Carried. Fine observer.

Mr Keyes: Who raised the issue in the first place?

The Chair: Can we leave it at this? In the next hour or so we will determine the number of school boards that were not represented and would not get a copy. We will have to do that because the copies that are available for us are limited. What I was trying to do was get a wider distribution. I think it is appropriate for all of the school boards, if you so desire, and I think by that motion you have. We will deal with those school boards. We will get those numbers, subtract the numbers that would have gotten it as presenters and then come up with that number, allowing some extra copies, which I think will be in demand, to be distributed through each party on an equal basis. How is that? If there is any other way of doing it, we will try to report back tomorrow morning.

Mrs O'Neill: To go back to the first report, is that totally out of print now? It is not available in any government bookstore? If anybody wants it, we have to copy it. Could we find that out?

The Chair: We will answer that as soon as we can, tomorrow or shortly.

Interjection: You can photocopy it.

Mrs O'Neill: You get sick of doing that, though.

The Chair: It does add to your cost, though. If you add the printing costs up front, then you can deal with it, because it is much more expensive to photocopy.

Mrs O'Neill: I am still getting requests for this report, I would say, weekly.

Mr Keyes: As we looked at our program, the steering committee, I am sure, verified the reason why you decided not to travel outside at all. Was that mainly because we did not get any permission to do any travelling, even once, or not? Tongue in cheek, but we had a lot of interest in going to Kingston for a trip to see that early childhood education centre and what it is doing.

The Chair: It was basically a time factor. The one parameter was of course the short period of time to ask people to come here, compounded by the fact of trying to arrange all the travel outside of the area. But if we have some flexibility, that is something we might still look at. But we do have permission; it is not a question of permission to travel at this point.

Mrs O'Neill: There certainly is a very Toronto-oriented group of people who are coming to it.

The Chair: Being here, it is understandable.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think, with regard to the length of time we have given people, we cannot do this again. We just have to provide more lead time to people. When I think that, for instance, the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation only got notice of this in January, and they are the two major teachers' federations to deal with, as well as the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, of course. That is not helping us and we are going to have to find ways, even when we are going over in our writing of reports, to make sure that our agenda is being established well enough in advance. We cannot make that mistake again, it seems to me.

The Chair: Your chairman has learned quite a bit in this job. I do take your comments and I will do that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am taking that as a joint responsibility for all of us.

Mrs O'Neill: They all have trouble even getting to provincial meetings.

Ms Poole: Mr Chairman, how many copies per member do you anticipate that we will end up getting?

The Chair: We do have five now?

Clerk of the Committee: Yes, five have been sent to every member of the committee now.

The Chair: Every member of the committee has five.

Ms Poole: And what additional ones do you anticipate we will get?

The Chair: Members of the Legislature have one each, the other ones who are not on the committee. We still have to determine where they are and in fact if they have been shipped to the government warehouse and all that stuff. We have to come up with those and we will try to get as many as we can out of that process. That is the phone calls that were going on this afternoon, to make sure we have those numbers. We should know tomorrow.

Mrs O'Neill: Tomorrow morning at 10.

The Chair: Any other further questions? The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned, at 1556.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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From the Ministry of Education:

Wasylyko, Walter, Senior Manager, Education Expenditure and Financial Analysis Section

Grootenboer, Theo, Chief, Capital Grants Officer, School Capital Program Section





Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 18 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 18 January 1990

The committee met at 1014 in committee room 2.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: I will call this meeting to order since we have a quorum.

I have a couple of notes on yesterday's situation. We have managed to finagle or otherwise get copies of the first report of the select committee on education, which were asked for. If you talk to the clerk we will try to work out other numbers if you need report 1, because that was a concern. On report 3, my office has been swamped with calls so I expect it is going to be a hot item. There were some 25 or 30 calls as of 10 to 10 this morning. I suspect that there will be other copies needed, and we will attempt to do that.

We had said that if there are any questions or comments on the agenda, if you wish to make any—we have noted the travel concerns raised by the member for Kingston and The Islands (Mr Keyes), and we will perhaps take that into consideration as we get going more, as well as of course the whole question of how we are going to deal with the French-language situation. As was suggested yesterday, I think the steering committee will take a look at how we are going to work that and then we will decide that. There are some complex legal issues involved in this, but as was also noted by Mr Johnston, we sometimes can deal in a fashion with that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just wondering what our arrangements are about writing a report. I notice that we have got ourselves going fairly much to the end in terms of people wanting to come forward. I have a feeling that because of the length of time we have been given here, we may actually have people making demands of us to try to come in at the last minute. I would not be surprised if that would occur anyway and I am wondering what kind of flexibility we have in terms of report writing, given that we are a select committee and we are not supposed to meet when the House is sitting, etc. Is there any word on that?

The Chair: The clerk tells me that it is possible for us to meet during the time the Legislature is meeting for the purposes that you

outline. I think we would approach the House leaders to ask for concurrence and we would do as we did in the fall—meet at various times to try to write the report—if that is acceptable to the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The idea would be to give some direction on the last day to Bob Gardner about how generally we want to see it go and then have the steering committee meet some time before the House comes back, if you need to talk about how things are going, and then to have a committee meeting to discuss the actual finalizing of the bill after that? Is that the general idea?

The Chair: General.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that okay with you?

Dr Gardner: I think that is all right. What is best from our point of view, of course, is if the meetings are separated by a few days or a week or so, so that we can take it away and work up what the committee has decided in one meeting. It was much more difficult last time when we were meeting day after day, so if there is some separation between them, it would be much better from our perspective.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If we could do something in early March and then try to get full a committee hearing by the end of March, so that we have got the writing of it concluded by the end of March, that would be a good goal for us, I would think.

Ms Poole: So you are talking about the first week of March?

The Chair: Could we leave the technical details as we go along and see how we are doing with the additional time for hearings and things? Let's leave the technical details but have a general agreement that the steering committee will set that up and will meet to work out the technical details. We will bring it back for the committee for discussion and then—

Mrs O'Neill: In reference to technical details, there are about four members of this committee who sit on the standing committee on social development. Just so Ms Poole will know if she is trying to set up a holiday or something, there is only one day in the first week of March, the Wednesday, that we are available, so it may be better to look at the second week.

The Chair: We will take note of that and see what that is.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I understand that we cannot meet as a full committee again during the breaks, so what we are talking about is a steering committee meeting that first week in March some time for a period of time to look at how things are going but not to have our full meeting until we get House approval some time towards the end of March.

The Chair: Right.

Ms Poole: So we do not have to worry about blocking off time in our calendars. That is fine.

The Chair: No, just leave it with us and we will attempt to get this all sort of synthesized and in writing. I will work with the steering committee and the clerk and we will work all of this out to get those technical details done, but right now it is not required to block out time. Other questions or comments?

Seeing none, we will start off with our agenda. This morning I welcome Sue Alderson and Julie Mathien from the ministry. I want to say that Julie was very helpful to Sudbury, when she was an officer with the Toronto Board of Education, in dealing with some day-care-related matters. I am pleased to finally meet her after writing back and forth in correspondence. Perhaps I can turn it over to both of you and you can make your presentation.

1020

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ms Alderson: I want to congratulate you for choosing this topic, lifelong learning, and in particular for your focus on education in the early years.

What I would like to do this morning is to frame a context for the early years initiative as it pertains to the Ministry of Education. I want to talk to you a little bit about how we are working through that initiative, then Julie Mathien will talk a bit about the child care update and answer some of the concerns that were raised yesterday and then we will throw it open for questions and answers, because I know you will have particular things and we would prefer to respond as best we can.

As you know, we do live in a time of pervasive change and the pace of change is increasing. In that change, we have increasing diversity and an increasingly pluralistic society. As well, families and structures are changing. Our understanding of knowledge, how knowledge is made and what

that means ultimately for our competitive and collaborative place in the world, is important.

I think in the future, in general, we are going to need to move to new patterns of connectedness. We need to rethink our curricular emphasis, we need to invite everyone to participate as best as we are capable of doing and we need to look towards developing adaptable, flexible learners who have a positive stance towards learning. I think we need critical, reflective learners. I think we need to concentrate on the 3Rs but not the fourth R, which in the past has been simply regurgitation. The quantitative knowledge is changing every two years. I think we need people who can think on their hind feet and who can process information and use it effectively.

In the context of restructuring in the speech from the throne, there were several themes and intent. I will just ask my trusty assistant to throw up these overheads. Do not throw up; just put the overheads on.

Ms Roy: I have the hardest part.

Ms Alderson: The wonderful person running the overheads is Laury Roy, who is also on the early years team.

The Chair: I hope she passed Education Machinery 101.

Ms Alderson: Probably better than I did.

Ms Alderson: My students always used to flunk me on overheads.

The Chair: That is good. Mine always felt that I went to summer school for two summers and flunked blackboard both, so I had to use overheads.

Ms Alderson: I also failed primary printing. The list of terrible things goes on and on.

Okay, the next slide. These are the chunks. The one that is not there, which is included under specialization, is the emphasis on technical education. This is not new to you, but I want to point out that I think the early years not only are the beginning years in terms of sequence but, I would maintain, they are the kernel, that young children have in fact everything that is already there wrapped up like a little seed, a kernel. They already have a very positive sense towards learning and I think what we need to do is capitalize on that in even better ways and work forward.

To me, the theme in all of these initiatives is the issue of equality of access. That is certainly one theme. Whether we are talking about just inviting more children across the province into junior kindergarten or the disadvantaged or the disabled, what we want to do is have equality of

access. I know that this government's agenda is equity.

We also want to continually be updating and improving the quality of our programs. I think what we are going to need in the future is more cohesion, more continuity. I think that is one of the emphases around the issue of the transition years.

You will note that I have slashed out "foundation years," which was in the throne speech announcement. Just by way of a small editorial detour, it started to sound like the underwear section in Sears catalogue, which really dates me. It also started to sound like fast-tracking these little kids for their places at Harvard and that was not the intent. As we go through the presentation this morning, I would like to chat more about that.

These young children, preschool and in the early years of school, have a lot to offer us and I think we need to become understanding, appreciative and advocates. They deserve good programs wherever they are. I think schools can offer good programs. We need to offer good programs to them so that we capitalize on these important years.

The process for all of these initiatives will be through consultation. You will get in a package at the end of this morning, or you may have received it already, an action plan which will describe the kinds of broad policy chunks that we are dealing with. What you have here is a statement of commitment, a statement of intent. What we want to do, through consultation, is bring more of the stakeholders on board; yourselves, for example. Everyone in Ontario who has a vested interest in early education will be invited to participate in a very full way before we develop our answers in stone around early years education, and we are well on the way to doing that.

Next slide. I guess we will do this chunk now. That is just a very brief backdrop. If I could concentrate on what I think are the key players, I am biased. I have been an early childhood educator for a long time. That has been my primary area of focus, aside from literacy education. I even had a nursery school at one point when the neighbours were sending their children over to play with my children. I decided that I might as well formalize this, since I was ending up with all these kids in my place.

As I see it, and I know there was a little confusion yesterday around this, the mission is really quite simple for the early years, in particular around junior kindergarten. It is to

provide equality of access. That is one part. The second part is to provide quality early years programs in Ontario schools.

Our focus is initially on half-day junior kindergarten. Approximately 80 per cent of the boards are now offering these programs. What we want to do, because of the equity agenda, is to encourage boards—and we do so by allowing a phase-in period of four years—and provide some support, some real support, probably never enough but some support, for boards across Ontario to encourage those boards that do not now offer JK to offer it in their community.

Virtually all school boards offer half-day senior kindergarten. Most of those boards who do not now are isolate boards, boards that may in fact have a half-day senior kindergarten one year because it is a small school and not another year and then another year. We get our data through enrolment. We can safely say that virtually all school boards offer senior kindergarten. We also want to encourage those boards that do not offer it to do so, provided there are students to participate.

The long-term goal is the full-day. We recognized at the outset that it would be difficult to insist on full-day right now, although there is an awful lot of excitement and interest in full-day, which is not surprising. The long-term goal is full-day, but we do recognize that it would be difficult for many boards. Certainly those concerns came forward yesterday. For boards that are high-growth and low-space, it is going to be difficult to go immediately to full-day. So what we want to do is concentrate on the half-day, across-the-province equity issue first.

1030

One of the other things we want to do, regardless of half-day/full-day, is look at the quality of the programs. There are many excellent programs. I have been in a position, certainly prior to coming to the ministry and somewhat since I have been in the ministry, to be in a number of jurisdictions across Ontario looking at primary programs. There are many excellent programs across Ontario, but we are continually getting new information and new research.

What we want to do is to provide some cohesion and continuity: first of all, within the programs that we offer in Ontario and, second, with child care or preschool or day care, and continuity and cohesion with the formative years as well. As you know, and as a report from the ministry pointed out in 1983, there is often this terrible gulag or wall that happens after kinder-

garten into grade 1. What we want to do all the way through the initiatives for restructuring is to give kids more continuity and more cohesion.

I would like to take just a few minutes now and have a small detour, if you do not mind, to talk to you about four- and five-year-olds. That is what I know best. I am from the program department.

Four- and five-year-old children are not really that much different from three-year-old children or six-year-old children. They do not slot into nice little cubbyholes of grades too well, but often people misunderstand this. My brother works for IBM and has two wonderfully bright, very precocious, very annoying children of five and three. It took them only two minutes to decimate my videocassette recorder. In any case, my brother does not understand, since his children had lots of opportunities in sandbox in day care and preschool: "Why do they have to put up with it again in junior kindergarten? Why do they then have to have it in senior kindergarten? For heaven's sake, somebody might even have it in grades 1 or 2. Good Lord, what's that?" I will develop that without being too pedantic for your purposes this morning.

If we go back and look at the characteristics of youngsters, they naturally come to us with what I would characterize on a broad stroke as an aggressive stance towards learning. They already had that. Would that we could maintain that all through school, we would not really be having many other discussions. They are curious. They are innately driven to make sense of what is going on in their world. They do the most magnificent learning feat that they will ever do in their lives, never duplicated again, and that is that they learn to speak. They learn it not because they have been given a structured, point-by-point curriculum, but because they have good demonstrations and models in their environment by caring people.

Barring damage, all children learn to talk prior to coming to school. All children are able, even those who sound mizzledy-splickety because they do not have particular sounds developed yet, to make sense with their language. The other thing they do is they use their language to develop their concepts. So they are very efficient learners. While they are learning their language, they are learning about stuff and they are learning to put things together conceptually. And while they are learning to put stuff together conceptually, they are learning more about how their language works and how to use it. They are very pragmatic. They do this very functionally and they do it relentlessly. Just check out parents who

are trying to hush up their children who are asking, "Why? Why? Why?"

They are relentless, persevering learners. They are joyous and they are spontaneous, barring deprivation, barring emotional abuse. They are wonderful learners. They really are. We really do have the kernel for lifelong learning here. They are flexible and adaptable. They will put up with arbitrary adults. They will put up with, "Yes, this time" or "No, because I said so." They will go for naps even when they do not feel sleepy; over your dead body, but they will go because you are bigger. They are wonderful and they are the last honest people on earth, these young children.

So what do they need from us? They do not need hurry-up courses in how to do Dick-and-Jane or Muff-and-Puff stuff. They do not need to perform, to tap dance quickly for fast-tracking parents. They do not need to be left alone. They do not need to be left with the TV as their only interaction for language. Those are not really great demonstrations of language and concepts. They do not need to be pulled from pillar to post.

What they need in general—and I think this is what schools and what other institutions that offer good early years and early education programs can do—are several important things. They need a socially interactive environment, because we know that language develops best and is acquired in a most sophisticated way if the child is socially interactive with peers as well as adults; not just a good, caring adult, although that is great. We also know, and I mentioned it before, the integral nature—in fact, it is inextricable—of the development of thinking and language.

When you put that together with the fact that this develops best in a socially interactive environment, then we have to get kids in good environments that offer that; cognitively as well, because they are curious, they are natural problem-solvers. You can notice that when a youngster of three or two or one is trying to fit shapes into a shape box. They will first of all just slam it around and look quite random. But you know, through common observation if you have got kids or you have watched other people's kids, it does not take them long to figure out. After that it is one, two, three and they have got them in the right place. They have learned. They have given themselves critical feedback and they have learned, and while they have learned they have paid attention to that, and they feel good. There is nothing better than the spontaneous joy of a young child who has accomplished something. I

would like to emphasize that what we would like to do is have programs that maintain those feelings of accomplishment with natural problem solving. The cognitive part is very important.

They need caring adults. They need knowledgeable adults. They need knowledgeable adults who understand the developmental stages, that children do not come in little boxes, that they come with individual needs, wants, learning styles, predispositions. They come with different backgrounds, too. Much of the research talks about the fact that many children come to school with very fragmented backgrounds. Some of those fragmented backgrounds could be good, but still fragmented—here, there, with no continuity or cohesion. But many children come to school from very fragmented backgrounds that we would also maybe globally term disadvantaged. Nobody is really talking to them or paying attention or giving them the kinds of foundation experiences that will develop social skills, thinking skills, language skills and, yes, even early literacy skills.

We know, for example, from some research that we did in the Ministry of Education called Arts in Ontario and a smaller version of that called Bringing the Bedtime Story into the Classroom, that children who are read to preschool and in school have higher language gains and concept gains than children who have not been read to, even in multilinguistic classrooms. I think it is very important that we look at early literacy, not in the sense of being able to fill out a cheque sooner but of getting acquainted with how language works when it is written down, because that is different from our talk. Talk is one way. We do not generally talk the way things are written except in bureaucracies, and then we all learn to talk and write in a similar kind of language. Other than that we generally do not talk in narratives and so on.

1040

I think schools are ideal places to provide these programs that are stimulating, that are geared for the particular specialized needs of four- and five-year-old children. I do not think they are the only place that it can happen. What I think should happen is that we have good, stimulating programs for young children. What is the next one there?

Ms Roy: I think you have the strategies for instruction in the 1970s and 1980s, or the mandate.

Ms Alderson: Let's do the mandate. I mentioned that before. If you would like to look at some of the goals, in terms of our role in the

ministry, what we want to do is work, through consultation and collaboration, with all of the stakeholders. I am delighted to see all the people and the kinds of people, the representation, you have on this select committee. I think that is wonderful because I am always conscious that we never begin with the needs of the four- and five-year-old. We usually begin the other way, with who is doing what, which gets us into funny territories.

But in terms of our role in the ministry, what we want to do is explore and develop policy frameworks so that we can ensure more adequate quality programs for four- and five-year-olds across the province. We want to explore a variety of communication strategies as well, because I do not think everybody understands how great four- and five-year-olds are or what they need. One of the things that we will do—this is not a comprehensive list—is we want to, in our policy frameworks, enhance opportunities for social interaction. We want to give a breadth of opportunities for language and early literacy development. I mentioned that. We want to provide the kinds of curriculum and program that will engender positive attitudes for future learning success.

The research on that—you have some references to this research in your package—is very good in terms of good early programs predisposing children, I think mainly because of the attitudes, but certainly also cognitively, if they are given good early programs. It is mainly the Ypsilanti work, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children booklet would be good for you to order. We could not give you very much except the bibliography and a reference because of the copyright. We want to extend young children's natural thinking strategies through play. We can build on that. We can invite them and show them different strategies so that they are not just mucking in sand the same old way all the time, so that they are developing.

This is why I said before that we need knowledgeable teachers also. We have many good teachers; I am not suggesting that we do not. I am saying that we need to be very clear about the sorts of things that happen so that we understand that children develop increasing sophistication. The sandbox is just their fodder, the water centre is just fodder. It is their material, because little kids prefer to work with their hands. Big people can sometimes work with their minds. Even big people would like to roll up their sleeves, though, and have a real hands-on experience. I think we also want to look more

closely at inviting children from all backgrounds to participate fully. This will be a challenge to us in an increasingly pluralistic and diverse society. It will be a challenge for us when we think of the disadvantaged, when we think of, as was raised in North Bay the other day, native children coming to school.

We want to foster self-esteem and feelings of personal worth because that is the fire that ignites everything else. You know yourself that when you feel you are good at something, by gum, you roll along on it and when you feel you are a failure at something or that you are not very good at something you tend to avoid it. The strategy, then, is to consult widely. These are some of the things that we want to do.

Our mechanism for consulting is that within the Ministry of Education each initiative has associated with it a work team—I have an early years work team—and that is a small nucleus of inside and outside people, just to keep us all honest and real. Julie Mathien is on my team and invaluable in terms of the child care issues and co-ordination, because that will be important. Children do not think in categories. Lynda Palazzi, a superintendent from the Peel board, is on the work team. Lise Charland, from the French-language board in Ottawa, is on my work team, as is Pat Dickenson, who is the from the Ontario Teachers' Federation representing the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. It is a small group. Fortunately I have a good branch team, most of whom are here this morning, who also are in the salt mines every day looking at this to try to get all of these things forward.

The process is that the work team will look at all of these issues, hear these issues, invite conversation around these issues and then take those issues and put them forward to a variety of reaction teams. Many of the people whom you are hearing from on the select committee will be participants on the reaction teams.

What we want is an awful lot of dialogue and debate and kicking the can around on all of these issues, that will help us get not only the best program policies ultimately for young children, but will bring all of the stakeholders on board as well so they feel they are true participants.

Once we have gone through this consultative process, then we will be able to develop reasonable options that I think people can reasonably embrace around these issues. We want to work collaboratively. I am pleased that you are taking part in this. I welcome feedback from this group, not just this morning in terms of

your questions and answers, but throughout. I would welcome personal conversation, I would welcome letters. We would like to hear from you.

I am now going to turn it over to Julie to talk about the child care component because obviously the co-ordination around that has been ongoing; we will need to do more in that area. Then I will tell you just briefly a little bit about some research that we are undertaking.

Ms Mathien: The school-based child care initiative is being implemented jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Ministry of Community and Social Services is the lead ministry for child care in Ontario, as I am sure you are aware. You also heard yesterday, from the school business and finance branch, that the initiative was announced in the speech from the throne in April 1987.

The basic components of the initiative are that every new or replacement school built with provincial funds is to include space for child care. Capital funds are provided by the Ministry of Education. Startup, direct operating grant and subsidy funds are provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. So the two ministries are working together to provide funds to put child care centres in new schools.

The centres are to be operated by nonprofit boards of directors and both ministries encourage the participation of parents on those boards of directors. We both feel that parent participation in decision-making around child care is very important.

The enrolment priority for the programs is for kindergarten, primary and junior school-aged children; that is, aged from three years and eight months to 12 years. Approximately 200 new centres, providing approximately 6,000 child care spaces, will be built between 1988 and 1993. The role of the Ministry of Education is that we work in collaboration with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In addition to providing the funds for this space, we do things like advising school boards on the development of board policies related to child care. We produce documents collaboratively. They are sent out from both ministries to child care programs, schools and school boards. That is the sort of thing we are doing on an ongoing basis. We encourage the use of vacant school space for child care. The funding for renovations and startup, direct operating grant subsidies, etc., comes from the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

1050

Sue discussed the need for continuity in a child's day a great deal. One of the reasons we feel that schools are a very appropriate place for child care is precisely this continuity. We have a number of initiatives in process now at the Ministry of Education that I think are going to assist this continuity in a child's day. Even though a child who is in school and in child care is participating in programs that operate under two separate jurisdictions, we feel that there really needs to be a flow to that child's day. They should not be put in two repetitious settings and they should not be in two settings that are so different that they do not know what to expect, so we are doing some research on school child care co-ordination.

The first part of that is a literature search, which is in its final stages now, that looks at the child care, education funding and legislation in about 13 countries and also has an annotated bibliography on the writing and research that has been done on schools and child care and the co-ordination involved there. There is not very much research that has been done. We did a précis of the international findings, which you will find in the package that the clerk will be able to give you after our presentation.

The other major research study that we are doing is a comparative study of school-age child care and the host schools in 40 sites across the province. All of the actual data-gathering has been done; the analysis is in process at the moment. It was done through onsite observation and interviews with principals, teachers, child care supervisors, child care staff, parents and children. We are looking at the presence and extent of school child care co-ordination, and we are also going to be able to give some news on the predictors of high-quality school-age child care, so we are actually really looking forward to the analysis there. We have five pilot projects on school child care co-ordination. They are province-wide as well.

Another major component of the child care initiative is consultation with the education community and other groups as well. This also takes place in co-operation with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I guess our largest effort to date has been a nine-stop consultation, which we did about a year and a half ago, where we visited nine sites across the province and met with people from school boards and from child care organizations to get some idea from them as to what our direction should be in the future.

Ms Alderson: It is sort of like the Mutt and Jeff show, is it not? I would just like to talk to you a little bit about the research that we have undertaken so far. If you have had a chance to peruse the blue action plan, you will notice that we have some suggestions for increasing the Ontario research in the area of quality programs. Because Laury Roy is here, there is no better person to ask. You do not mind if she describes to you an interministerial project that has some bearing on the work that we are doing here and also a recent research project she was able to pull together on our behalf that is very good?

I did not tell you you were going to do this, Laury. Do you want your notes back? You are fine?

Ms Roy: I think I will be fine.

Ms Alderson: I think you will be wonderful.

The Chair: Would you like to take a microphone so that we have Hansard. Can she be heard? Okay, good. I know we had some trouble with the other one.

Ms Roy: The Ministry of Education is involved with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services in a project that is looking at providing quality care programs, assistance co-ordination and co-operation of services for children who are at risk of developing social, behavioural and emotional problems. This is really a wonderful project. The layman's term for this project is the Better Beginnings: Better Futures project. We have published some material that you may wish to receive. You could certainly contact Sue or myself and we would be happy to do that for you.

The focus of this project is looking at children from birth through age eight and to see how the local services in the community and government services can co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts to ensure that these children will have a better chance of success in the future. By that we refer to their overall cognitive, social and physical development and the prevention of behavioural and emotional problems. The goal is to assist communities to bring greater support to families and children who suffer from any kind of disadvantage in terms of their ability to achieve in their life.

The goal of this initiative is to establish a high-quality research and demonstration project. The study will continue over a period of about 25 years and chronicle some of the aspects of effectiveness: effectiveness in terms of the quality of programs, effectiveness in terms of the ability of communities to respond to these needs and, as well, effectiveness in terms of the

economic benefits. Does prevention really assist communities with lower costs in the long run for other kinds of assistance programs?

In terms of the research around junior and senior kindergarten, we are doing two things. We have begun a literature search, and this is continuing, that is assisting us in examining high-quality programs around the world that have been created for children in this age group. Sue was referring to the fact that in Ontario we have many high-quality programs for children at this age level. We feel that we have made a great foundation, a great start in terms of these quality programs and that now is the time to look more closely at those programs to gain additional insights into what makes effective programs and exemplary programs even more effective.

Just this week we have called for proposals to be delivered to us to examine the quality of junior and senior kindergarten programs in the province. We hope of course that will lead to perhaps other interesting issues and topics for further research that will assist us as we go through continuing to develop policy and programs. I think that is about it.

Ms Alderson: We have a couple of other things up our sleeve, but we are willing to take suggestions. Other research that I think would be important to do in Ontario, and has been done in other areas, is to look at language and concept development as predicting for better literacy development later on. It would be good in Ontario, for example, to duplicate Gordon Wells's Bristol study, that sort of model here.

Another one I think Professor Weininger was engaged in. I have not seen a report on it. Julie is the old research-monger; maybe she knows. Otto Weininger from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who is also an eminent early childhood educator in Ontario, was looking at the relationship between play and problem solving. It is an area that I looked at myself in graduate work and it is fascinating. It is generally an area that is misunderstood. The bottom line is that play is necessary before one becomes a good problem solver, but it is hard to convince people with just that statement. So it would be good to have some real Ontario hands-on research around that area as well to look at. Does this, for example, predispose better for math development? Does it, for example, embrace women, young girls and does it predispose them to feel more confident about math development? Those are some of the things that I just bring forward as ideas that we have at the moment for the kinds of things we need to continue to do in Ontario to

look at quality programs, what can make them more effective and more efficient.

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That concludes the formal part, such as it is. It would be better now if we allowed you to ask questions and we will do our best to answer those.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I very much appreciate your presentation. You have evoked interest. I have six speakers, but before we go on I—coming from Sudbury—really appreciate your talking about mucking and salt mining, although it is nickel mining in Sudbury; a good reference, I suspect.

Ms Poole: I have two areas of questions and I am going to be very evenhanded about it. One is for Sue, and possibly a comment by Laury if she wishes to, and the other is for Julie.

The first one: For the first time in Ontario education history we are going to have mandatory junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten by the time this phase-in is through. I assume that this will also increase the pressure for standardized curriculum for the four- to five-year-old level. Keeping in mind your comments about how individualized children are at that age and keeping in mind that although they are efficient learners there may be a need for province-wide, standardized curriculum—and by this I am not talking heavy-duty Dick-and-Jane or cognitive stuff; I am talking about social skills and all that other—what movement has there been within the Ministry of Education to provide this comprehensive curriculum?

Ms Alderson: We are beginning that. That is a key question, I might say. First, I think we can provide very clear indicators. In your bibliography, you will be getting from the NAEYC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States, what it considers are developmentally appropriate programs from three to eight, which will give you some indicators. But in Ontario I think we can be very clear about the kinds of things we think should be in place and the kinds of general expectations we can have.

On the other hand, I think you quite rightly pointed out the dilemma. Since children do learn at different rates and in different ways, I think we have to give room for that, especially in early childhood, because we do not want to negate feelings of positive accomplishment and success.

Also, we need to realize that these are optional attendance programs. In that sense we cannot set standards that require all children to have

covered so many units in sandbox or so many units in blocks so that then we consider that we have an X starting point in grade 1. Parents will have the right to have their children attend stimulating programs that they choose, wherever they choose to have them attend, or to have them remain at home in environments that they choose. So it is a tricky line. I am confident that we will walk it and walk it well. There is an awful lot of support and there is an awful lot of interest. I think we can be very clear about the kinds of developmentally appropriate programs and why those are there, the objectives and what we expect, without having them as in any way a prerequisite to get into grade 1. It is something we will be working on.

Ms Poole: You see providing guidelines for stimulating programs, but you do not see our moving in the direction of a standardized province-wide curriculum for that age group?

Ms Alderson: I cannot at this moment in time, but this is a point that we will be developing through consultation. I cannot at this time see that we will have standardized benchmarks, you know, that by the end of JK you will be able to—in that sense of benchmarks—by the end of the grade 5 you will be able to, simply because these are optional attendance programs and we have heard very much from people who say: “Gee, will my kids be penalized? Will they have trouble in grade 1 because they are not going to your four- and five-year-old program?”

The emphasis, let’s remember, around the mandate is—we are practically there with half-day senior kindergarten and the emphasis for the half-day junior kindergarten is to provide equality of access. It is an equity issue, to provide these programs across the board. It is not a head-start program. It is a good-start program, I think.

Ms Poole: I have one other question, which I will direct to Julie. It is concerning the capital programs for day care in new schools. I asked this question yesterday of the school finance branch and got a very financial-type answer which basically said that construction in existing schools that would cost the same as construction of day care in a new school is not on the agenda paper because there just is not enough money. That is the answer I got yesterday. I am specifically referring to John Ross Robertson Jr Elementary School and I know, Julie, that you are familiar with that situation.

My question to you is, as an early childhood education expert or—

Ms Mathien: Person.

Ms Poole: —person, as a member of the work team, do you philosophically think that the Ministry of Education should be discriminating against existing schools in long-standing areas—and this particularly affects Metro—by saying, “Even if you can provide day care space and new construction for the same cost as we could put in a new school, we will not put it in as part of our mandate because it isn’t a new school”? Do you have a problem with that concept?

Ms Mathien: Well—

Ms Poole: Now for the easy question.

Ms Mathien: With all due respect, I think that is a very political and a very financial decision. The government has not made that decision; the government made the decision to place them in new schools. It is a joint initiative, and at the time the government made the decision to put the funds into child care space for new schools it was assumed that the Ministry of Community and Social Services would continue to pick up, as it had been doing all along anyway, the funding for renovation of vacant space in existing schools.

That is essentially where we are at. I think that is the best answer I can give right now. It may not be very satisfactory and I apologize for that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I never like to take on bureaucrats, I prefer to take on their political masters, but reading between the lines of what you are saying today, I see a system which—I mean, you could have made it sound an awful lot better, and it seems to me that it is. We are making some major policy initiatives on JK and SK, and yet we have not worked out most of the underlying principles that need to be worked out before we move down those roads. Instead we talked about doing after-the-fact pilot project kind of research.

I look at this and I just say to myself this is no way to govern an education system. I am not here to place the blame on the bureaucrats who are left with this, but if I look at the fact of the matter at the moment, we do not have any consistent notions of what should be done in JK. We do not have any consistent notions of what the class sizes in JK should be across the province. We have very strict standards for what we expect in a day care kind of facility, but we do not have them for child care in terms of the kindergarten process. We do not seem to have any kind of notion as yet established about what the intrinsic links need to be between a child care facility in a school and the kindergarten facility in the school in terms of the seamless-day concept. It does not seem to have been worked out at this point in terms of any kind of rationale for it.

We do not seem to have any idea at the moment of what their responsibilities are in terms of educating people in these fields. You did not say anything to us today about, for instance, the training of teachers in the faculties of education around early childhood responsibilities and the training for people in ECE courses, the various kinds of courses that are available there and how those things, in my view, have very little relationship to each other at this point. Yet these are the same kids we are dealing with.

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My personal notion is that your notion that they cannot have mandatory curriculum developed because of the different expectations of kids and their development at this stage is a straw man being put up in terms of the notion of entrance into grade 1. If we start thinking about these groups in strict one-year periods of development, instead of looking at that whole primary development thing as a group and understand that we do not need to be thinking about where a kid is at the end of senior kindergarten and whatever restrictions we are going to put on that but within a continuum of what we are going to expect in the primary section, then we are going to get ourselves in an awful lot of trouble.

To say therefore that you cannot have some kind of notion of what a curriculum that would be presented to kids during the JK-SK field is—I am saying that this is what we are expecting. Whether they make it through that and their development during that period is another matter altogether, in my view, but to say that is what we are going to provide is another matter. I do not think we know yet what the mix of creative play and academic curriculum should be in our system. I see that issue being ducked, frankly, in what you have basically said today. I find that fairly disappointing.

I have a number of very specific questions which I have not heard any response to at this point and I would like to just go through some of them. But that is my overall reaction to what we are hearing at this stage.

Let me just ask you, for instance, how many of the boards do have co-ordinators of child care at this moment. We have heard that most of them do. How many of them do and who pays for them?

Ms Mathien: I can find out the actual number if you want an exact number. I can give you a guesstimate, but I can certainly find out the actual number of school boards that have child care co-ordinators. The school board picks up the cost of that co-ordinator.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The entire cost. Why that presumption? I do not understand why school boards, which are now being required to take in new day care centres in their new schools as part of the ministry's mandate, should be stuck with the entire costs of bringing in co-ordination. It makes eminent sense that somebody has to do the co-ordination. Why is that cost being dumped on them? I just do not understand that.

Can you give us the differences in training of teachers around developmental theory and what the expectations are in children in these age groups, between what is being taught at Ryerson, what is being taught in the rest of the community college system and what is being taught by the people in the faculties of education? Have you done an analysis of what those people are being instructed?

Ms Alderson: We are in the process of a review of that in the centre for teacher education. I can give you some notions about that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is rhetorical, to the government: How is it that we can make major changes in policy in terms of where we are going on SK-JK and not have done those kinds of things, moved child care into the schools without any kind of notion of looking at those kinds of things? I do not understand how we are doing it in this order rather than having done that study first.

Ms Alderson: I am not going to apologize for the fashion one way or the other, but I think what you have here is basically an initiative that is working towards, struggling towards looking at a seamless day. What we have begun is the child care, because parents and school boards have wanted to have before, after and during child care. What we have now with this initiative is wanting to have boards across the province offer JK. We do know quite a bit about the kinds of programs that are going on in ECE. Julie knows them more intimately than I do. I know perhaps more intimately the faculties of education.

I can tell you that it is something on the table and there are concerted efforts now to look at bridging mechanisms. I think the community colleges, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and the University of Guelph offer a great deal to those students in terms of training for these youngsters. I also think faculties of education are doing a good job in that area as well. In fact, I know that the University of Western Ontario in London and York University are looking at this. They have a grant from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to develop an emphasis in this area in particular.

I want to say, though, that what you have here is a statement, first of all, about the equity issue across the board for JK because we already have virtually all school boards offering half-day SK and 80 per cent offering half-day JK. So that is the first thing. I think what we have is a statement of intent to pursue even more continuity and cohesion and improved quality of program.

In terms of my personal observation, and not speaking as a bureaucrat, I have to disagree that there is a huge amount of difference between these programs. I think we can develop clear standards. I am sorry if that was misunderstood. I do not think we can develop particular kinds of achievement benchmarks, since it would be prerequisite, but I think we can be very clear about our program and curricular expectations for JK.

I totally agree with you, Richard, that we should have a continuum, and we are working very hard towards that. But a lot of these issues that you are raising are very real and I think will have to be resolved. They will be resolved through our consultative process.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just think—again, it is not your responsibility—that there is a chicken-and-egg problem here. I think we are doing things backwards and should have worked out a bunch of these things in advance before we raised parents' expectations about what they are going to get in terms of equity. Equity for what? As far as equity of access is concerned, something is going to be available to them, but how does it fit with the other things that are there? I do not think that at this point it does particularly, that there is a coherence out there that we can point to.

I want to talk a little bit about the early identification side, of the value of this, which has been well researched in other areas. What are the responsibilities at the moment of people in the system, JK or SK, in terms of identification of problems? As far as I know, at the moment we do not have a mandatory reporting system through the boards about absenteeism. When we raised that question with boards in one of our recent sets of hearings, we found that basically one of the key means to find out if a kid is having trouble is if he is not there all the time, and yet there was no systematic way of reporting that back through the board, let alone to the ministry, to get some idea about how those things were going on.

We do not have any kind of concept yet about what the ministry thinks should be an appropriate child-teacher ratio so that the teacher has time to be able to identify some of the problems which may be a little more subtle than some of the

others. That is not done yet. The presumptions about the kind of training people have to identify that are something I have some real concerns about in terms of what is out there.

For example, these pilot projects for 25 years: Pardon me for being cynical, but if we do not know now some of the things that work in inner-city schools—is it not about time we started putting them in a major policy and not pilot projects? I think we are in real difficulty. I do not think we have training for people to be able to do proper work in inner-city schools, frankly, at this point in our faculties of education, or any specialized kind of training that is developed in our ECE courses around that.

I have real difficulty with some of the presumptions that are there now as we move into the sort of holus-bolus JK, SK and supposed seamless days. I do not think we have the preparation in terms of early identification or special education kinds of concepts. I would really like to hear your comments on that.

Ms Alderson: Okay. If I miss some of all those bullets, help me out, remind me.

In terms of early identification, I think we have considerable expertise in the province. Every board is required, under Bill 82, the Education Amendment Act, 1980, to have early identification programs in place. I do not know if your comments about absenteeism and people not really knowing, or whatever it was—I might be misinterpreting that—was that particular to JK?

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you are asking for the primary section and specifically the kindergarten statistics, as I recall, and this goes months back, it was the Durham Board of Education that had done some looking at some of the problems and in fact there were patterns of absenteeism that showed up as early as senior kindergarten and junior kindergarten.

Ms Alderson: I am sure that there will be patterns of absenteeism.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But that there was no systematic reporting of this, no systematic analysis of it and no research being done on it in terms of that early intervention to help those kids who are going to be programmed for failure probably. That would have been one indicator of the problem.

Ms Alderson: Perhaps that is a suggestion for our research. But I can tell you that in terms of the early identification procedures primary teachers, and in some boards junior teachers, and certainly this would apply to junior kindergarten and kindergarten teachers now, do have regular

reporting mechanisms—at least it is my understanding that they do; I cannot speak specifically to Durham—through observation and through other kinds of analysis, and that when a child is in difficulty the teacher reports that to the principal and perhaps the school psychologist or the psychometrist would come in and do further testing. If it is really alarming, it would seem to me that then the next procedure would be the IPRC route so that we can get a more particular program for those particular needs. That is legislated.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: But you see, we do not even have a class ratio notion for allowing a teacher to have the time to spend.

Ms Alderson: Okay, I would like to talk to that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Say you have got 20 to 25 kids in a junior kindergarten, which is not unusual in my experience.

Ms Alderson: In fact, the statistics on it say that across the province, on average, junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten have fewer than 20 students per class.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No.

Ms Alderson: I agree I have heard also about pockets.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There are places where that is true and there are places—

Ms Alderson: That is what I am told by the stats people.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But that stat is meaningless in the sense that on a board-by-board basis—

Mr Neumann: Why is it meaningless?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just about to tell you. The reason that it is meaningless is that on a board-by-board basis there may be a really good policy, to have a maximum of 16 in a JK, have teachers' aides come in and that sort of thing. The next board over may have no policy at all on it or a policy that allows up to 20 to 25 in that class and no automatic entry of an aide into it, because there is no provincial policy on it and there is no directive on it.

We come out with a policy and say grades 1 and 2—and now I notice in our notes that grade 3 has been added, which is a wonderful thing. Did you notice that? Bob Gardner's notes suggest that grade 3 is now going to get down to 20 to 1 too. If that is the case, thank God that the coherence is absolutely just blossoming in the ministry at this stage. But the difficulty is we come to the 20-to-1 notion there and yet we have no concept of what

we are doing with JK and kindergarten. We talk about transitions and preparing kids for a smooth transition into the rest of the primary section. I say to myself, "If we don't even have a notion of what the optimal ratio should be at that level, but we can have it for them when they are in day care, we know what we think it should be there and we know what it should be in grade 1, but in this area which we are now making a major policy for, because we don't even have a damn policy on it, something seems to me to be missing there in terms of what our expectations are of the people we are trying to deliver in the field."

Ms Alderson: First of all, you will have a policy on it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again, it is after the fact.

The Chair: Perhaps we could go on. I know you are making points, but in the interest of time I am trying to give equal allocations to everybody.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know you have six people on your list. I should let other people get in. Let me not get so exercised.

The Chair: I will give you a break in the action.

Ms Alderson: There is a range of outstanding issues that we still need to deal with, that is perfectly accurate. These will be dealt with through consultation as we develop our policy. That is certainly one of the issues. Staffing, differentiated staffing, different models of delivery and training, all of these are issues we have identified that we will work out. We have a number of things in the mill in terms of bridging mechanisms, for example, between early childhood education and Ontario teachers' certificate training. These are under way.

Mr Neumann: I really enjoyed your presentation. It is obvious that you love the work you do.

Ms Alderson: I like little kids.

Mr Keyes: Then you will like us.

The Chair: Let's keep rolling.

Mr Neumann: The comments you made about the natural inquisitiveness of young children and their desire to learn and explore their world are certainly true. I jotted down when you said: "Language development is almost automatic, barring damage. All children learn to speak by the time they enter school."

Ms Alderson: Some a little better than others.

Mr Neumann: Some a little better than others.

Ms Alderson: My daughter better than my son.

Mr Neumann: I would just like to pick up on some points raised earlier and talk about early identification because I am very interested, having observed children who are bright and eager and fully capable of learning and also having observed children who learn with extreme difficulty for a variety of reasons. You mentioned about the early identification that exists within the kindergarten program, where all boards should have early identification. What about the linkages to the public health units in the community, the linkages to the day care programs? Is there any kind of referral from day care through the education system to give an early identification of these children?

Ms Alderson: Yes. I will let Julie answer that part, but let me say that there are always—usually; every time I say “always” somebody finds someplace in Ontario where it is not happening. There ought to be linkages with—and that is my observation in the boards I have been in when I have been involved with early identification programs—health. I think we need to improve those linkages. Certainly we need to look at the total welfare of the young child. I certainly think that this is an area that is communicated informally. There may be formal mechanisms that I am just not aware of, but I am sure it is informally communicated between the child care operator and the junior kindergarten or kindergarten teacher. Then there are mechanisms put in play through the school system for early identification. But early identification is a mandate. Let's remember, too, that the focus of early identification is to adjust the program to be more satisfactory for that child's learning achievement and emotional stability.

Ms Mathien: There is no mandatory early identification in child care and you are always walking a fine line between trying to serve the needs of the child who may appear to be special in some way and not labelling that child. Because when children are very small, as you know, some kinds of things that look a little funny when they are three they have totally outgrown by the time they are six, and you do not want to slot a child in a particular situation.

All that having been said, certainly in the early childhood education training people are encouraged and taught to observe children. If a centre does formal early identification there is nothing in place either in regulation or policy that says you must communicate with the kindergarten teacher, but there is a recognition that it is a very important thing to do. Certainly both the Ministry of Community and Social Services and

the Ministry of Education encourage that kind of communication. As a matter of fact, we are in the process of developing the third issue of *Child Care and Schools: Questions and Answers*; you have issues 1 and 2 in your package. That is one of the areas we are addressing and we give suggestions for the kind of communication that might take place between child care and schools.

One of the other things that can take place is that child care staff can sit on school teams now that which generally deal with special-needs children before they get to the individual placement and review committee stage. It is happening more and more that child care staff are participating on those school teams, or even participating in what is called the IPRC process, which really happens prior to a special education.

The other thing that we have to be very careful of is parental consent about release of information about their children either way, school to child care or child care to school. It is important that this happen with the knowledge of the parent.

So it is not formal, but there is a recognition in the field that it is very important.

Mr Neumann: JK and SK are optional, but parents—

Ms Alderson: It is optional attendance; many parents would like to have other options.

Mr Neumann: I am leading to a question.

Ms Alderson: Oh, I am sorry.

Mr Neumann: Has there been any study done on what children do not attend and whether or not there is a higher percentage of risk children among those whose parents choose not to send them to junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten than among those who do?

Ms Alderson: The headstart programs that were done in the United States were specifically directed at inviting and offering enriched programs for those children who might not participate in programs. They found good gains emotionally, socially and particularly cognitively.

My observation is that at the other end of the continuum—okay, to answer that, I think children from deprived backgrounds are living in situations where parents probably do not feel comfortable or knowledgeable. I think that we need and one of the other things that we want to do is to look at some outreach strategies that will invite children from those environments.

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Mr Neumann: I will make my question a little more specific. We have some areas of the province where there has been not only senior

kindergarten but junior kindergarten. Do we know what percentage of children are not attending? Have there been any specific studies done in those areas to determine whether or not there is a higher percentage of children at risk among those who are not attending the junior and senior kindergarten programs?

Ms Alderson: To my knowledge, there is no specific research in that area. I think the kind of thing that Laury was talking to you about in terms of the co-ordinated primary prevention initiative will address that. I think it is an excellent idea.

Mr Neumann: May I have one more?

The Chair: Sure. Could I just add that I was a teacher in the headstart program in Watts? I can tell you that a lot of the informal research that was done was very much along the lines you suggest but it was such a difficult problem, with the cultural and other things the blacks were going through in the inner city, that it was very hard to separate out pure research on a model that said—you could never get a pure model of comparison or anything else in your research. It was a very difficult task, but there was a feeling or an assumption or an idea that the kids who were benefiting were benefiting because of the contact with other people outside of the home and giving them another side of life that they were not getting. Father Knows Best on television was kind of the only thing they had and they could not aspire to all those kinds of things.

There is some research through the Detroit inner-city and black community at Wayne State University. Some people did some research in there as well which you might want to refer to on all that headstart, but I think there was a germ of an idea. Whether anybody picked it up or not, that is—

Ms Alderson: I have a reference to that.

Mr Neumann: I think you could do a study. Let's say in a board you took a group of 10-year-olds. You could very quickly determine from their records whether they attended junior or senior kindergarten and then take what percentage of the ones who did and what percentage of the ones who did not have gone through the IPRC. You could get some statistics that would give you some idea.

Ms Alderson: I think that would be an interesting study too.

Mr Neumann: My final question goes right to the very beginnings, and that is prebirth. I read a fascinating book this past year, called *The Broken Chord*, about the impact of alcohol on the foetus, foetal alcohol effect, foetal alcohol

syndrome. This may be outside of your field, but obviously there are children in our early childhood education who are suffering the effects, and from the book I read, there are dramatic effects on learning abilities, just from even minor use of alcohol.

Ms Alderson: Or cigarettes.

Mr Neumann: Doctors are becoming more and more aware of it. I am just wondering, in the education system as a whole is anything being done to alert potential parents to the tremendous damage that can be done to the child's ability to learn through the use of alcohol during pregnancy?

Ms Alderson: It is not anything that we will address directly, but I think it is absolutely critical that we do two things.

Mr Neumann: I am talking about preventing the damage.

Ms Alderson: I know you are, and I certainly applaud that and I have long been an advocate of that.

One of the things we need to do, in the confines of this initiative, is to invite parents to participate more. We need also to be doing more parenting kinds of courses for our young girls as they go through school and young men as they go through school. This sort of information, as part of their regular courses, will be helpful. I think we need to do more outreach kinds of things also, to educate in the community. In other words, what I am trying to say is that I agree with you. The days of the isolated school doing this and the community doing that are over. I think that we want to work towards education and social benefits being of a piece. I do not know, to tell you the honest truth, when we would get to doing that specific thing, but I think it is important.

Mr Keyes: I will not take much time, because it has been touched on by both Richard and Dave and in order to give opportunity to the other parties, but I have two observations. I think your statement, Sue, hits the nail on the head when you talk about the children who are coming into the system. It works well for those who come with that aggressive attitude towards knowledge. We really have to concentrate our time on those who are not coming with that attitude and those who do not come, as Dave was just referring to, because they are probably the ones most likely at risk and the ones we are not reaching through the program which could probably assist them the most, when you talk about those who have not suffered deprivation. I think that is going to be the challenge for boards of education, to try to

reach those people. The other one that Richard touched on was teacher education and training for these people as well.

I merely pass a small observation that it is interesting to note that in your work team you do not have any males whatsoever and I suggest, not facetiously, that it is a very important aspect which you should be looking at as well.

Ms Alderson: Good for you. This is all being recorded? Every last word, even what I am saying now?

Mr Keyes: Right. I think that is where we have failed for years on the whole educational side, attracting males to the early years. I had very good experience in doing that in my days and I always made sure I had a male teacher in grade 1 and grade 2.

Ms Alderson: I intend to highlight this and send it to the appropriate people.

Mr Keyes: So maybe you would comment on why you have not put a male on your work team.

Ms Alderson: I am but a minion.

The Chair: That answered that question, I guess.

Ms Alderson: No, that is too cavalier. It is an inequity. It is certainly against my personal beliefs. Affirmative action can go both ways. I certainly know that youngsters in my own experience respond very well to male models. Personally, I hate the view that little people can do little things with little minds because they have little minds and they usually do it down the hall, far away, where it will not be too messy. I hate that kind of chauvinism. I understand from the assistant deputy minister that he is in the process of finding me a man.

Mr Keyes: I will help.

Ms Alderson: Good, give him a little buzz.

Mr J. M. Johnson: Ms Alderson, I found your presentation quite interesting. At times I thought you were talking about my little three-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter Sarah. I firmly believe that every child in the province should be entitled to the same quality of education, and unfortunately that is not happening, in my opinion.

You highlighted equality of access. I totally support it. Just as an example, I have seven grandchildren, some of them in the school system. They have attended schools in four different municipalities: Wellington, Dufferin-Peel, Grey and Durham. There is just a substantial difference in the quality of education in the four different boards, really a tremendous

difference. I think Dianne raised the point about standardization programs, that there should be some guidelines that the same thing is—

Ms Alderson: I definitely agree there should be.

Mr J. M. Johnson: And it is not being taught now. So if we are bringing in new programs for these junior kindergarten, younger children, then the ministry has got to take a responsibility to see that the boards are presenting the same type of program. They can be adjusted, to some degree, but there cannot be a major difference.

Ms Alderson: No, I think we have been perhaps talking a bit at cross-purposes about what we mean by standard. If you will look in the action plan, you will see that we intend to develop a policy framework and guidelines and I think we can be very clear in our descriptors. I think that will in fact smooth over the differences that you report. I think it will make it very much more explicit. Remember that under The Formative Years, as we knew it and embraced it, the junior kindergarten and kindergarten were dealt with almost inferentially. So I think you do have a variety of things. We will have the renewal of The Formative Years available soon, and I think with our guidelines building in the continuity from both sides so that there is not—I quite agree with that earlier comment—any split, we will have clear standards in that sense, yes, standards in the sense of can you test per se that they have accomplished X, Y and Z. I think it still remains open to debate, let me put it that way.

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Mr J. M. Johnson: We have to deal with the problem of equality, and Richard raised some points that I firmly supported. Maybe the parents' and grandparents' expectations are not being met. In my personal experience, it is not that easy to solve that problem. I quite frankly do not think the teachers have the time or the inclination or whatever to deal with the children who need special assistance. In many instances, it is not provided in the manner that you mentioned earlier. I truly wish that it were but I feel that too often they have to deal with the majority of the children and some children are left to slide by. The ministry should be focusing on some type of review to see that this is not occurring.

Ms Alderson: I will take that forward. It certainly has not escaped us. It is one of the identified issues where we need to do more work in the work team and in our consultation. I thank you for your comments.

Mrs O'Neill: I have a few introductory remarks. I am surprised that 83 per cent of the boards are providing junior kindergarten now. I did not think the number was that high. I am very encouraged by that.

I do have some of the same concerns that Mr Johnson has because I have been involved, in one way or another, with junior kindergarten for almost 20 years and I am surprised that there is not more standardization of curriculum, board policies or whatever. It does seem to be an area that somehow or other boards have done in their own way much more than in the other areas of the educational system—primary, secondary.

I was very happy to see that you presented in your select reports and research the top document, which is a document I continue to have very close to me physically all the time, *To Herald a Child*. The author happens to be a person I studied with at one time, whom I agree with and disagree with from time to time, but I do think that was one of his better efforts. I still find and have, whenever I can get a copy of that, given it to favourite people. I really do feel that is a document that still has not come alive.

I just want to add one other thing. Julie was very discreet and accurate in her description of the decision of how new schools were determined, the area in which the funding would go for the child care centre. I happened to be quite involved in the decision-making process at the Ministry of Education at that time. That was not an easy decision. Then to put in—and you did describe very clearly—the replacement school became another very political issue, and it had to be a replacement school. I remember very carefully how the terms for that were described and how much of the school had to be replaced. It was a very interesting but difficult discussion. Anyway, that was the way it was, and it was economics and it was a very political decision. The minister himself made that decision.

To go to a couple of specific questions, I find it difficult that absenteeism is not more easily detected, and even in your response to Mr Johnston you did not give us that because surely that is the way the grants are allocated—the attendance at the school and the enrolment. Can you say a little bit more about how those statistics are kept? I think he is correct that we did—I thought it was actually the Peel board—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I knew it was one of the surrounding boards.

Mrs O'Neill: Is there any attempt, or are you now just going to begin to look at that? I know 20 years ago that was important and was one of the

indicators of whether we brought special education consultants into the initiation, at that time, of the junior program that I was involved in with my daughter.

Ms Alderson: I cannot speak to particular cases that might be different from this, but my understanding and my personal observation is that teachers do keep, not that register that we did perhaps, but very close tabs on who is there and who is not. In fact, with the little kids, the teachers I know and have worked with and observed will phone up parents, or the secretary will. Many of the schools have phone programs in place so that if the child does not show up, they phone to make sure that the child is sick and not waylaid somewhere.

Mrs O'Neill: That has been my experience.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is second. That is another issue, in terms of making sure that a child is not being a victim of some other problem.

Ms Alderson: Okay, so in terms of the recordkeeping; I take your other point about the relationship, Richard.

Mrs O'Neill: I want to ask Julie, if I may, a question about the emphasis for school-aged children, three years and eight months to 12 years, for the child care centres connected with schools. Is that still very much a highlight of the policy, and what kind of feedback have you had from communities? I know that has been debated some, especially where there are vacancies, which I was trying to bring forward yesterday, that some of these centres are fairly vacant.

Ms Mathien: In elementary schools that is still a highlight of the policy. The capacity of those centres is usually only about 10 per cent of the total school population. That is a very general figure. So it still seems to us that it is going to be—in fact, in most cases the centre will be full and have a waiting list within reasonably short order in any event.

We do not want to be in a situation where a child who is actually enrolled in elementary school and needs child care does not happen to have a space available because for one reason or another that space has been filled by a younger child. We feel the priority for Ministry of Education capital funds is properly for people who are attending school.

There have been a couple of instances where a centre for one reason or another has not achieved some kind of enrolment stability within a certain period of time. In those instances, I believe they have been able to enrol younger children just in

order to keep the centre afloat, but I think there have only been two instances that way.

There is some flexibility in terms of the secondary panel. The reason for that is, first of all, we were getting requests from communities that were receiving allocations through secondary schools to have centres for younger children in secondary schools for a number of reasons. First of all, there are not any elementary schoolchildren there. There were a couple of cases where they were able to walk from the elementary school to the secondary school and accommodation has been made for them in those cases.

There were other reasons for putting centres for younger children in secondary schools. That has to do with people returning to school who have children, either teenagers or adults, and also for having some kind of placement for secondary school students as part of a family studies parenting course or something like that. It makes sense to have those right in place there.

So there has been some flexibility in the secondary sites. We are sticking pretty closely to the elementary school-aged child in the elementary sites, though.

Mrs O'Neill: My final comment has to do with the parenting courses, and I certainly am very happy that you are still considering those. I think they too have been around for 25 years and I think they go in waves.

I hope it will be one of your goals that you will try to bring those into the continuing education courses as well. I know it is important to have the students deal with that subject in one way or another, whether it be family studies or physical education, health or however they put it into the curriculum, but it is when people, young parents or even older parents, get into situations that it would be nice if that was almost a standardized program in the continuing education area, which I do not think it is. It usually is left totally to social service agencies, and people somehow feel that the only people who go to those people are those in dire need. Sometimes it has a stigma attached to it if it is some social agency that deals only with problems, so I would encourage you to talk to your colleagues in continuing education about supports for the family, particularly in the parenting field.

1150

Mr R. F. Johnston: Could you give us the numbers of parenting courses which have day cares attached to them that exist in the province and where they are?

Ms Alderson: We will try to provide that for you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I presume we will get that when we get our list of day care centres in the various schools and where they are as well.

The Chair: And all of those other and sundry things that we are dealing with, right? Sudbury Secondary School in Sudbury is one of the pioneers in that job.

Mr Jackson: I am interested in this notion of not having standardized benchmarks. Yet I distinctly recall that one rationale advanced for this program generally in the throne speech was that it would assist those children who are behind their peer group to come up to a level that would allow them a more equal chance. I guess it is understood that at some point we would be able to have that benchmark. So how on the one hand can we say that we are not going to have benchmarks, yet we recognize children's disparate abilities at the point of entry and that we somehow are creating a program to narrow that. What are we benchmarking?

Ms Alderson: Certainly what we want to do is level the playing field in terms of language and concept development because that predicts well for general school success and achievement later. The dilemma we are in is that on the one hand we can describe very clearly indicators and describe good programs, but in optional attendance programs we cannot make those requisite courses for grade 1. Certainly what we want to do is to offer the kinds of programs in JK and K that will predispose those children attitudinally, cognitively and socially to have a higher success in later school. I think we can do that.

Mr Jackson: If that is the case, then let's talk about English as a second language in our urban schools. Do you see specific programs designed to assist children who come in who have no working knowledge in English in junior kindergarten?

Ms Alderson: I think that all assistance in terms of heritage languages, ESL—

Mr Jackson: You are talking about heritage language. I am just saying that when a child walks into junior kindergarten and he cannot speak a word of English, what are the junior kindergarten objectives for that one-year life experience for that child? What are we going to do for that child?

Ms Alderson: All of the programs, all of the mechanisms that are currently in play will be in play for JK and K. They will not be excluded from those same kinds of mechanisms.

Mr Jackson: So what you are saying is that they will have the same access to special education programs.

Ms Alderson: Absolutely.

Mr Jackson: What do we do with a school system that has a class of 20 JK, optional, and 18 of those kids have English-as-a-second-language difficulties, they have severe language difficulties? How is the school board supposed to provide the resources for that kind of program? I know that is not an uncommon model, and it is also a more frequently occurring model in the greater Toronto area.

Ms Alderson: Yes, I agree. I think there are a number of things that are already happening, but I agree it is a challenge and we need to look at that more carefully.

One of the things that is difficult for people to sometimes come to grips with is the fact that even though children are coming with different languages, when they co-operatively work with materials in an open kind of environment they figure out what each other means and they learn to communicate, so that is not as severe for those young children as it would be for us.

Mr Jackson: But we are looking at special programs, special materials and special teachers.

Ms Alderson: Yes. But I think the other thing that can happen is that very often schools could make use of parents in the community. Grandparents in the community are a marvellous resource. By inviting these people to participate, on a one-day basis, an every-other-day basis or whatever they can give, they bring this translation, if you will, they bring the language, the culture and—

Mr Jackson: I do not consider translation to be the major single impediment here.

Ms Alderson: No, I was using that in quotes.

Mr Jackson: It is very difficult for a system to measure a child. Once children enter our system they have the full right to special education. So their cognitive and other skill deficiencies are separate and distinct from any language difficulties. Once we get past our need to understand their language, then we are able to measure them in many respects. Some things can be measured without language, I understand that, fine motor control and all those things.

Ms Alderson: I see, I understand.

Mr Jackson: I am trying to get a sense of how we can have a program that is provided to the whole province without specific understanding. We should be further along in terms of develop-

ing a curriculum and materials and specialized teaching support and funding because of the unique nature of the challenge facing those children, which just happens to be experienced in a more severe fashion in what is considered contemporary urban Ontario, Toronto-centred contemporary urban Ontario. I am at a loss to understand how we expect a program to succeed when we are not adjusting for that factor, just the first factor on language. I could move to special ed in a moment and get into that area with that.

I want to hear from you your sense of whether or not the system can be dealt with on its universal underpinnings, as it is now being considered, when we are not sensitive to the special education needs. Are these children going to be identified as having special needs and are we going to get additional grant moneys in junior kindergarten? Is that the plan here? Maybe I am missing a most obvious question.

Ms Alderson: I do not know the answer to the grants. The grants would be available as they are available for all other children in the schools.

Mr Jackson: But there has to be an identification process of the child who is to be identified.

Ms Alderson: Yes.

Mr Jackson: There has to be an identification process and it takes some time. So all junior kindergarten children are entering at the basic per-pupil grant rate. Can you share with me that this is what is going to happen?

Ms Alderson: That is my understanding.

Mr Jackson: What do you understand is the time at which we start doing our assessments? How soon can we take a child? To fulfil the promise in the statements we have heard, not by bureaucrats but in the political sphere, that we are going to enhance the life chances for that child so that he can catch up and participate more equitably within his first year, at what points are we doing those kinds of rather expensive assessments, or do we do system-wide assessments of JK children and screening as soon as they come in? What do you see as the plan?

Ms Alderson: It is really complex. It has to be dealt with through consultation. That is not a put-off. There are several levels. First of all, when you ask me—

Mr Jackson: I am sorry to be specific. Do we have a regulation in place that says at which point we begin assessments of these children?

Ms Alderson: That is under the special education legislation.

Mr Jackson: We have a regulation in place now and it is triggered by the parent and the

teacher feeling that the child is at some degree of risk.

Ms Alderson: It starts before that.

Mr Jackson: Okay, and this is even in the prescreening before a child enters—

Ms Alderson: Yes.

Mr Jackson: —and the teachers go out to the home and meet the family and they are looking at the three-year-old who is coming into the junior kindergarten program?

Ms Alderson: Yes. I remember when Halton was a beacon for this approach.

Mr Jackson: I was involved with the Halton early identification study, which I know you are familiar with, in the early 1970s when I was a trustee.

Ms Alderson: There is an informal thing. There is a partnership out to the community, there are the health people and so on. A model such as the one in Halton is now embraced in many boards. It is an area that we will have to deal with across the province.

Mr Jackson: All right, but these have substantive funding implications, which is really the meat of this question, with respect to dollars and cents. What is to prevent a board, even legitimately, going out and identifying entire classes of special education children?

Ms Alderson: What prevents them from doing that now? What I am trying to say is that I am not the funding expert. Second, the same mechanisms are in place for junior kindergarten and kindergarten as exist now for the rest of the elementary and secondary school system. In terms of policing that sort of thing, as to how many boards, I do not know, I am not in that department. I can try to find out.

1200

Mr Jackson: It is not a matter of policing as much as—

Ms Alderson: You said, "How many boards will"—how do we know? It could happen.

Mr Jackson: The concern is that to be paid on the basic grant rate is a significant financial loss to a board to offer that program in good academic terms. We got clear evidence of that yesterday, an admission to that, that we are funding the program on an average grant basis. But everybody acknowledges that these are highly expensive programs, whether or not we have got all the curriculum and materials and staff support in place, just the simple ratios and the promise that we are using this as catch-up for some children, as a boost for some children whom we do not

wish to start that far behind in regular full-day, or just half-day, senior kindergarten.

It strikes me when I look at that, knowing how boards operate and knowing that there are some specifically challenged kids in this province who are being identified, and the urban Toronto child on average, we are creating a complication and not dealing with the problem as it really exists—perhaps differential funding or whatever.

Mrs O'Neill: I am finding what Mr Jackson is saying is very difficult, because once that child is identified, then he feeds in to the regular special education services of that given board. Many of them, as you know now, are also getting the home care program from the district health council. So to say that because they happen to fall into the regular GLG—they also fall under all of the other services that a board has. I am sure you must have, as I have, seen many, even junior kindergarten children, taking advantage of those services.

Mr Jackson: Exactly, but you will also have appreciated from your work on this committee that we are seeing a "rob Peter to pay Paul" philosophy occurring in education.

Mrs O'Neill: I will not express it that way, so please do not put those words in my mouth.

Mr Jackson: You can interpret it any way you wish, but the fact is our select committee report recognizes, as have deputants, that with the pressures that have been put on special education funding by blending it into the GLGs, by capping it, we are going to potentially see a situation where we shift our resources from other children into this program area, because it is expanding. We are expanding gross numbers and we are expanding public expectation. One example is language. As we saw with the the adjusted pupil-teacher ratio, boards reacted by pinching in other areas. All I am trying to get at is that point, that we are creating an increased access to special ed.

It is bad enough that enrichment as a weighting factor in this province is sliding badly because the weighting factors for English as a second language and these kids who are severely challenged are putting that kind of immense pressure on the system. I do not think we should deal with that issue in isolation of what is going to occur with these children. We promised that the purpose of the program is to give them a better boost so that somehow they are at a more even benchmark at some point in the primary division. Richard addressed that issue.

Anyway, I have made the point that concerns me with the way we are dealing with special

education funding and the boards having to react to the contemporary—Richard highlighted the notion that we do not have the early childhood co-ordinators in our boards. Where do we expect we are going to get the money? We know that boards do not have the pure accountability for those dollars—they are globally adjusted to a board and then dispersed—so yes, special education money will be used to hire early childhood co-ordinators.

That is my point, that something is going to suffer somewhere else. We are squeezing a balloon, unless we somehow get across the notion that this is going to be a more expensive program than the parameters, generally, we are hearing as to how we are going to fund it.

Ms Alderson: I will take that forward.

Mr Jackson: I think the minister has heard it, because he has heard it from, actually, every board and educator in the province, so it is not new news. I just want to get a better sense from you of the extent to which you have any information about the identification of children with special needs in the junior kindergartens, where they exist, and to the extent that we have seen a growth in those numbers. That is my final question.

Ms Alderson: We do not have any specific information at this time on that. We have general information and figures on early identification.

Mr Jackson: That was my fear.

Ms Alderson: But that may be available on a grade-by-grade basis, and I will inquire of the special education branch and provide that if it is available.

The Chair: Final speaker, Richard.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know we are past time. These are subjects that we should put off to a later time, or if you want to respond in writing, please do.

One of the things we have not talked about today as we have dealt with the sort of development of JK and SK is the question of the entry dates for kids into the mandatory school system. We have received in the past a lot of information about how that can be problematic in terms of the rigidity of the entry date and often the example is the too young boy student being programmed for failure as a result of coming into the mandatory system too early. That is the example that is always raised.

What we have not heard from you today at all is where is the ministry going on flexible entry dates. People have talked about semestering, for instance, and allowing kids to come in in a

flexible way, in terms of, it seems to me, the JK and SK initiatives but also in terms of the mandatory programs in grade 1. We have not heard anything from you in terms of that.

Ms Alderson: I think flexible entry is something that we will be considering when we develop our policy framework. It is certainly something we need to look at.

Mrs O'Neill: You twigged in my mind the recommendation we had in our first report of the select committee regarding taking those first four grades as a unit regarding flexible grading and entry. Have you as a department or unit discussed that recommendation at all in a pilot project manner?

Ms Alderson: Not in a pilot project manner as yet. If you will note, in the action plan we will be developing pilot projects, putting forward recommendations next year. That could be considered.

One of the things we do have at the moment is a lot of mechanisms are in place in terms of our internal work for maintaining a continuity between early years guidelines around programs and the renewal of the formative years programs. I certainly think there is all good evidence that we ought to treat the young child on a continuum. I certainly think that is accurate. There is a lot of conversation going back and forth in terms of this.

Mrs O'Neill: We had some pretty strong representations on that and we seem to be convinced by them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The final thing I have is another issue that has not been raised here at all. It is touched on in our staff's report to us. The issue is what specifically is happening in the United States around curriculum and the early childhood area, and that is that the yuppies—it is becoming a class issue essentially—are opting to go to the private system in order to get more of the straight academic curriculum because the creative play philosophy is the only one that is now being developed in the JK-SK kind of field in the United States. There is a lot of evidence now that yuppies are either opting to pressure their own local boards to put in particular schools which go that route, and they will go in through the bright kids' route, which often just means a class-based route in my view, early on. The notions of what should be done in early childhood curriculum are by no means clear at the moment. There is a major backlash against the creative play philosophy and a desire to get a more particularly academic curriculum in earlier.

Ms Alderson: First of all, let me say that our mandate as a work team is to develop these through consultation. So if you did not get any clear emphasis, it is because it will be developed by hearing from a number of people, the people who like and understand creative play and the people who do not like and understand creative play, like my brother who works at IBM.

Mr Jackson: And he works on a computer, so you rest your case.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope your brother does not read Hansard.

Ms Alderson: He does not read me. Nothing starts at home.

There is a whole range. I think it is important that everybody gets a kick at the cat and develops that. I could give you my personal opinion in this area, but it would not be appropriate.

1210

Mr R. F. Johnston: The reason I am raising this is because we are already seeing class-based distinctions between schools taking place around heritage language right now in the west end of the city, where middle-class Anglos are moving their kids out of schools where heritage-language programs are provided and the people who are being left in the schools are basically the working-class immigrant families. The good teachers tend to want to head off with the middle classers as well. We are seeing a lot of it.

Ms Alderson: Sure, that is easier.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is something we had better be aware of.

Ms Alderson: Let me just say this, though. I can say this today. We will strive to get a balanced curriculum so that it does not represent just one approach.

The other thing I would like to say is that I think in general the issue of play—which happens to be an area that I would love to talk about at another time—has been misunderstood and I think there is all justification for the fact that it has been misunderstood in the United States and in Canada, in places, because I think it is symptomatic of a larger problem that I think we need to address in this initiative and all of the initiatives, and that is the lack of communication. I think that we need to improve our communication strategies with our classroom teachers, with the parents and so on. I think we have a responsibility now to explain the sorts of things and objectives and the learning rationales behind these things. I think we need to improve this.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is basically what I was saying in the first place. I think we are ass

backwards here in terms of what we are developing in structures of education, without having developed the curriculum that we think is appropriate, without having developed the teacher-student ratios that we think are appropriate, any of those kinds of things about how we are going to get the seamless day, how we are going to get the easy transitions. What should be expected of people but total confusion when, for political purposes, we move on JK-SK without having done any of this stuff in advance? You are left trying to catch up now with documents after the fact.

The Chair: Sometimes the leaders lead and the other people do the work afterwards too. I guess that is a comment that I am allowed to make once in a while.

Interjection.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have not ignored your position. What do you think the classroom size should be—12 to one as it is for the child who is leaving junior kindergarten and going to day care in the afternoon? Should it be the same as that? I do not know what the Liberal position on this is.

Interjection: Do you have yours.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have mine.

The Chair: You do have yours, that is good.

Ms Poole: I promise this will only take 30 seconds. I heard a new buzzword today: the seamless day. Can we have a definition of what that means?

Mr Jackson: Staggered lunch, staggered start times, staggered finish times somewhat.

Interjection: That is an awful lot of staggering.

Mr Jackson: And stagger home because you are too tired.

Ms Alderson: That is only if you are working where I work. Julie is really a seamless-day expert, but my understanding of the seamless—

Mr Jackson: Seamless-day person; we have already been through this.

Ms Alderson: In today's society with often both parents working as a reality, or one-parent families, it really is very difficult for many parents to work around the school hours as they stand. We have made good strides forward in terms of school-based child care, so that children can come before and have a place after school, but we need to look at co-ordinating and collaborating and consulting with other educational partners so that ultimately and ideally, with all the money in the world, we can have for children stimulating, appropriate, well-

explained and clear programs that can be opted into from early in the morning until late at night.

Mr Jackson: "Well-funded" would be underscored if you were trying to throw something my way.

Mr Neumann: And reduce the deficit at the same time.

Mr Jackson: I have always felt spending for children was an investment, Mr Neumann.

Ms Alderson: I said with all the money in the world.

Mr Jackson: Oh, all right.

The Chair: If I might, before we adjourn, I still have some difficulties in the old school-new school argument. I taught in an inner-city school and spent a lot of time in the education system in those areas. Although you have been clear, I am just not understanding the rationale of old schools versus new schools. It does seem to me that the older neighbourhoods perhaps need the service more in that sense than the newer ones. When we get the list of schools I would like to see some of those so I can remain convinced, as I said yesterday.

You you mention some of your research on TV versus reading skills, I am interested in some of the studies that have come out of the United States on the balance between television and reading. You had mentioned Bringing the Bedtime Story into the Classroom. I think there are some valid studies.

Ms Alderson: I think maybe we should provide you with that summary. It is quite interesting because it does happen in inner-city schools in Toronto with multilingual children, children who come with a variety of languages. What they have found was that just by reading aloud to children English stories, not only did children's language development improve, but the authors felt—and I do not think they could be this conclusive, personally—that there were indicators that the children would have greater overall school achievement. That certainly echoes the Bristol study done in England by Gordon Wells, who is now at OISE. I will provide that. It is a good synopsis.

The Chair: And also the other study that Bob was going to ask for.

Dr Gardner: Yes, the study that Laury mentioned earlier about disadvantaged children. I think that would be useful for everybody to see.

Ms Alderson: Okay.

The Chair: The last thing I am very much concerned about is I do not think I heard of a native representative on your task force. A male was mentioned earlier, but I think if we are going to be including natives more and more in our education system then natives who are going to be participating in these studies have to have some sense of directorship on that. I am very much concerned that is not a part of your study group because I think that they might provide us very strongly with some of their role models and some of the ways they bring up kids in their early years, their formative years, that they have some very good things to say about the whole education system in their way. I think it would be very interesting for the rest of us who are non-native to have the benefit of their wise, sage advice in the early family situation.

Ms Alderson: I will take that forward, but if I may clarify, the work team was intended to be very small so that it could turn around things very quickly. However, the reaction groups will have native representation and there are several levels of reaction groups. There will be a key reaction group that will have that kind of representation, native and multicultural and so on. They will be working very closely with the work team. In other words, the work team prepares drafts of issues and sides and takes them to the reaction team, so we will have the benefit of their advice, expertise and debate.

The Chair: Except, understand please, that starting on Watts as I did, always the case was: "The whites write all of the stuff for us to react to. We never get in on the ground floor." I think I am making the point very clearly that non-natives have done this for a hundred-odd years, ain't got it right yet. Why are we perpetuating something that is dealt with? I want to be as kind as I can, but I want also to express some of the concerns of those folks who are not at this table and some of the understanding that I have received, about Torontonians even, from northern Ontario. In some cases, I think that is changing. Let's move on a bit. I understand some of your work. I really appreciate your being here with us this morning.

Ms Alderson: I will take that forward.

The Chair: I know you will.

I adjourn this meeting until two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1218.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1407 in committee room 2.

The Chair: I am going to call a quorum. If Dr Doxey is present and would you like to come up to the front we can get started. Perhaps you could introduce yourself a little more formally than I just did and then we can proceed.

Dr Doxey: Okay, fine; I will be glad to do that.

DR ISABEL DOXEY

Dr Doxey: I am Isabel Doxey. I am a professor in the school of early childhood education at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and an invited guest of the committee.

The task I have been given this afternoon, I think, is to talk to you and to answer your questions primarily in relation to training and training issues in the early childhood field. I did not come with any prepared materials today, but I certainly would be happy to provide anything for you that you felt would be useful to your deliberations once our discussion finishes. I have a sense you are probably, like a lot of us, drowning in paper anyway.

I was actually going to start my remarks with a general comment about what early childhood education is. Even though I think you have been well oriented already by the people you had visit you this morning, let me give you my point of view of what early childhood education is and what some of the issues are, because that underpins some of the concerns about training.

I would define early childhood in three ways. One is the age way, zero to eight. Just a comment here: traditionally it always used to be seen as zero to five or zero to six, just preschool, but now the term has become a much more generic one and it does mean zero to eight, and that has some interesting implications.

To me the other dimension of defining early childhood education is really related to how it is delivered. Early childhood education, to me, can be delivered either through the child care system or through the educational system. I think the Ontario Association for Early Childhood Education has an apt phrase that rather fits here and that is, "Good care educates and good education cares." You cannot separate one from the other, and I refuse to in any definition of early childhood education, even though we can talk about it being delivered, as I said, through either the child care system with that sort of funding and

support and regulatory framework or through the educational delivery system.

The third part, to me, of a definition of early childhood is one that addresses philosophy. Usually today when you use the term "early childhood education," there is almost an implicit implication of an educational philosophy here that is developmental in nature, that supports programming and curriculum that is responsive to children's needs. That tends to be all part of that definition.

As I go along I will play a question and answer game with myself and with you this afternoon.

I also want to raise the question of why. Why is it important? That maybe leads us more specifically into the training issues.

There are two reasons I think early childhood education is being so put under a microscope by you people and the public press and the parents. The first reason is that we are now much more cognizant of the significance of early childhood in lifespan development, and second, early childhood has become so important now for financial reasons. We know that there can be a cost saving there that results from quality early childhood programs. If you catch them when young, you can redirect them, or I think as Plato said in a quote that is on the front of our own literature, "The beginning is the most important part of the work."

What are the training issues? At the risk of being a little facetious and superficial, let me perhaps develop an analogy here and that is, if you have foot problems, you need a chiropodist, a specialist. If you have a brain tumour, you are not going to go to your dentist. Why, with young children, do we think that just because you have something that calls you a teacher, you can deal with this age group most appropriately?

We do not allow early childhood educators to teach auto mechanics, so why should we allow people who do not have some kind of special training, focus, understanding of the issues, the programming and the age group work with what has often been called our most important possession and resource, our children? Maybe that is one of the questions I am going to try to address for the next few minutes.

One of my key concepts obviously then is yes, there is a need for specialized personnel and specialized training in this field. That begs another question. It begs the question of what

kind of personnel, what kind of training and how it should be delivered.

I hope I am going to be consistent here with what I said earlier about early childhood, and that is that I want to address the training issue more from the point of view of the content of the training, what it is somebody needs to work with young children, and I will make some remarks about the content. Then I want to address the challenge of how we deliver the training after we have some content questions.

I would argue that there is core knowledge for early childhood educators that can be identified with a fair degree of consensus about what that core knowledge is. If we begin with that premise that there is this core knowledge, then I think we can better address the issue of how it can be delivered. To me it does not matter if the training for an early childhood educator is delivered through a preservice vehicle, such as a community college or a faculty of education, or maybe another series of combinations, or a particular kind of in-service vehicle as long as that core knowledge and that core set of competencies is nurtured.

One of the other training principles that we well recognize in other career areas as well as in early childhood is the principle that training and professional development is a lifelong thing. There is some of this core knowledge, core competency, that needs to be part of preservice training, but there also need to be vehicles and supports to ensure that the professionalizing and continuing development can be allowed to happen beyond the preservice training level.

Why do I not just stop at this point and see what questions there are, or whether there are particular issues you would like me to raise or address in relation to some of the training themes.

The Chair: There are a number of people who may be asking questions. Normally you make your presentation and then there are questions, but this is probably an appropriate time for a break for questions.

Mr Neumann: This morning we were talking about the need to identify fairly early on the children who may encounter difficulty in learning through the education system. What is done through the training process to assist the people who will be working in the field of early childhood education, particularly in the day care centres?

We were talking about the importance of linkages to identify the children who may be candidates at least for testing and monitoring,

because they could be the ones who will have to go through the IPRC process later on to receive special needs education. What is done at the training level to assist the people who work in this field to identify those children?

Dr Doxey: I will back up a little bit in answer to what is done at the training level. The reason things are done at the training level is that there is no mandate within the child care system for early identification in the way there is at the moment in our educational system. That does not mean it is not done.

Therefore the kind of training an early childhood educator ought to get or does get, in relation to the identification of special needs or high-risk children, is maybe more varied, more informal. Certainly I would argue that our program at Ryerson, as well as most of the community college programs, puts a great emphasis on observation, the teacher's skills of observation, learning how to document that and how to monitor child development and child progress. That is a big core of the training program.

The question is, why and what do you do with it? There are neither the demands nor the supports in the system now to allow that information to be transferred. I will give you a specific example.

Let us suppose you have a three-year-old who comes into a child care facility. Maybe there is some observed language delay that the child care staff is sensitive to, observant about and maybe attempting to program for. There is no vehicle now for documenting those observations or even for passing on or sharing that information when that child goes to kindergarten.

The kindergarten teacher gets the child perhaps the next year and starts at square one with the early identification program, unless she is sensitive to the fact that there might be information there on this child from the child care staff and she individually takes the initiative to get it and find it.

I know we have a problem with confidentiality and ethics and so on, but it is still—

Mr Neumann: Do boards of education not do some advance—I am not sure if I have the right word here—work, let's say, for want of a better word, to try to identify children who are entering their system?

Dr Doxey: Yes. I think many of the boards do.

Mr Neumann: Would it not be logical to communicate with day care centres as part of that research, and with public health units?

Dr Doxey: Of course it would be logical. I am not so sure that it is done unless it is within the guidelines of that particular board that is looking at early identification in that way. Maybe this is a question you would want to pick up on with some of your other guests and with the boards.

1420

Mr Neumann: So you see a weakness here then.

Dr Doxey: Yes, I think so. There is a lot of very positive and useful information that your child care staff could have if the child happened to be, say, in nursery school and in an early childhood program, or even in a private home day care program, that is not always accessible to that kindergarten teacher unless he seeks it individually.

Mr J. M. Johnson: What you are saying makes eminently good sense. Why do we not do it? Why does the Minister of Education not accept the reality that—

Dr Doxey: This is really off the top of my head and is going to be a very personal opinion, but I think it is probably a jurisdictional issue, in the sense that if children are in nursery schools or child care before they come into the school system, the Ministry of Education has nothing to do with that.

Mr J. M. Johnson: But is there not some way we could define some type of process by which that information could be provided with the child?

Dr Doxey: Other than absolutely recommending that any of that early identification, that early screening, certainly ought to include an investigation of the child's prior group experience.

Mr J. M. Johnson: All knowledge of the child in day care would be of benefit. Why could that information not be attached to the child and go to school with the child per se?

Dr Doxey: I am sure a vehicle could be found to do that which would not contravene confidentiality and ethical codes. How you would attach it, I do not know.

Mr J. M. Johnson: Okay.

Dr Doxey: It is a really interesting issue.

Mr Neumann: Could I just conclude?

The Chair: You asked first; then Mr Jackson.

Mr Neumann: I am not sure it is true that it is not happening. I know that in our area the board of education does—I am not sure if it still does, but at one time it had a program which was a summer program for children entering kindergarten. There was an attempt made by contacting

other agencies within the community, such as the children's aid society, the public health nurses and other agencies to identify children who perhaps needed a little bit of a head start entering kindergarten, and they were given a summer program.

I am not sure there is nothing happening. My question was on the training and what is being done to train people in the day care area to help identify those children for school boards. Maybe what we do need is a greater direction to boards or a greater initiative on the part of boards to work towards that early identification. This is an area the committee, I am sure, is going to look at because we are looking at the interrelationship of day care programming and the extension of the kindergarten.

Dr Doxey: Certainly within the training programs—to repeat myself—there is a lot of emphasis on observation and the skills and tools of observation as a means to understanding children and for monitoring their progress. The observation is primarily the vehicle for program planning. In other words, what then ought we to be doing in our nursery school or our child care to assist this particular child wherever we find out he is?

My question would be in relation to the other comment. Yes, it would be easy maybe to mandate, regulate or guide that the information is collected when children arrive at school, but what are you going to do with it? To me, unless it is going to be information that is accessible to the teacher, which can be used to modify, change, adapt, design the program that child then needs, why waste your time collecting it?

This again leads me into the training issue. You need the people who have the training to know how to use that information about a child's level of functioning to plan a program, and that does not always happen in some training opportunities that are there now.

The Chair: Cam, do you have a follow-up from this as a supplementary and then I will go back to Jack?

Mr Jackson: I think it has been answered. It strikes me that information has to be interpreted consistently in order for it to be applied with any basis of understanding and for it to be meaningful. That is what you are saying.

Dr Doxey: Yes, exactly.

Mr Jackson: Can I now jump to the larger overview question about the differing personnel providing programs? A child can be in an educational setting for his half-day morning and

then in his half-day afternoon in a day care situation. I do not want to discuss primacy, which is a better level of program, the educational one or the day care component, but it is hard to make that transfer if the language is not the same.

You have introduced the notion, without saying we should do it, of the jurisdictional problem. Maybe day care should belong in Education if in fact we subscribe to the notion that children start learning at two and three in whatever setting they are in, and we should take the utmost care and attention to ensure that we are not just custodial but that we are monitoring and supporting.

Dr Doxey: I am not going to comment on your attempt to draw me in about whether child care ought to be under Education. I know there are people behind me who have some strong opinions about that. However, I will certainly make a comment—

Mr Jackson: I was not attempting to draw you in but to listen to you very carefully and objectively. You are saying that the breakdown is on a jurisdictional basis and that there is dysfunction in terms of the linkage, or it is not a strong linkage, in terms of the language used by those charged with the responsibility for the child and who are very motivated towards his forward progress. They really cannot communicate, or maybe the language at one level is so simple that it can be communicated, but then that is why I threw in this notion of having two different types of program in a day, morning in junior kindergarten and afternoon in day care.

Dr Doxey: Maybe there are vehicles to monitor what happens in the programs by backing up again to the whole training issue. Let me pull out perhaps a couple of examples.

Mr Jackson: For whom, ECE workers or teachers, or both?

Dr Doxey: My crystal ball suggests that we could look at some sort of bridging vehicle that would recognize what the community colleges do as some part of the package or some part of the credit and that maybe could recognize what the faculties do. Some years ago there used to be a committee, for example, that examined and maybe vetted the ECE programs in the community colleges, I guess to look at the diversity and the variety and also the similarity. That seemed to disappear. I throw that out maybe as a thought that has been lost and does not need to be.

There is another thrust that maybe could be adapted here, and that is that between Education and Community and Social Services at the

moment there is a fabulous interministerial collaboration around child care and early education. To me, that collaboration needs to extend more to the training area. I do not want, and I refuse, to say that the community colleges are better. The faculties are lousy. They do not do their job. I think they are all trying to do their job in a certain kind of way and I think they all make a contribution.

What we need to recognize is that somebody who wants a pre-service training to work in the early childhood field maybe could get this piece of it there and maybe there would be part of the ECE diploma that could be recognized towards a certification. Maybe there is something that needs to be added that you could obtain at a faculty. But the ultimate goal would be some sort of documentation or qualification, or recognition at least, that this person had some of these core competencies around child development and observation and program planning.

Mr Jackson: If that is your crystal ball, it is exciting, and those are the kinds of notions that should be challenged. There are a series of programs in Ontario where that very question is raised.

Dr Doxey: Yes.

Mr Jackson: Levels of nursing is just one example.

Dr Doxey: It is happening in other jurisdictions. Many of the states in the United States have played with—

Mr Jackson: That was going to be my next question. In terms of where you have seen jurisdictionally that they have brought this question to term, what are they doing?

Dr Doxey: A couple of things. I could be wrong on my states, and maybe this is information I could check, but in some of the eastern seaboard states, and I think also in California, they have a qualification restriction around teachers in the educational system. You might only be qualified to teach early primary, say junior and senior kindergarten and up to the end of grade 1, and never any higher.

Now, we have a kind of restriction like that because secondary school qualifications do not necessarily allow you to teach in the elementary or the primary division, but that sort of bridge in qualification. That then might also be recognized by the child care delivery system as meeting the requirement for training staff, but it would be a certificate that would be eligible in either system and it would certainly have to be negotiated and accepted by both systems. As I said, other people

are playing with different variations of it and I am surprised that Ontario has not been more in the forefront of that, because certainly we have been in other areas of early childhood.

1430

Mr Jackson: It is generally in the area of manpower planning, and manpower planning in education generally is under pressure and scrutiny at the moment. We do not know the degree of pressure we are going to experience with junior kindergarten and full-day senior at this point because we do not really know the exact numbers, so we may now be throwing a third group of instructors, teachers, into the pot of availability and qualification.

Dr Doxey: There is a lot of anxiety out there about exactly that issue. There is probably an immense territoriality, and I see by your schedule for the next few weeks that you are certainly going to hear that. I know I hear from those early childhood people who work in the child care system: "They are taking our kids. Why can't they take me? If the four-year-old is eligible to go from my nursery school and they want to put him in junior kindergarten, then what is wrong with me as his teacher? If I can work with him all day in the nursery school, why can't I work with him in the junior kindergarten?" That territoriality is very powerful; it is very strong.

There is one on the other side too and I know it is supported strongly by the teachers' federation. I can say this because I walk between all these systems all the time and I do not belong to anybody. They say, "You can't do it unless you have a degree."

I can understand where both camps are coming from and I think they both have a real legitimacy to their argument, but I want to come at this from the child's needs point of view. I say we have to find a way to meet the needs of young children, the high-risk ones that you identified, and be creative in our thinking about training.

Mr Jackson: I remember when we as trustees were looking at implementation of Bill 82 this question was raised in terms of institutional care of children and their personnel and then movement to the school system. Perhaps we might get some very brief one-page analysis of these problems—the problems did occur, we know that—how they were resolved in terms of jurisdiction and transfer, because that was the question. The only wrinkle was, "You are taking our kids from a 12-month program and putting them in a nine-month program, but you won't take us." That is what I heard from those people. I know some were absorbed and some were not;

some were retrained and some were grandfathered. Perhaps we might revisit that as, what did Ontario do at the start of the last decade with a similar problem and what might Ontario do at the start of this decade with a comparable challenge?

Dr Doxey: Maybe to support that inquiry I could give you one reference which is an in-house document, and it is rather an old one. There was a study done back in the early 1970s that examined the impact of teachers working in kindergartens who had the faculty and maybe the primary specialist, in comparison to those teachers who were working in kindergartens who had the two-year community college. It looked at the impacts on the children and the differential in their training. I think it was a study done by K. G. O'Bryan and some others and it might have been called the junior kindergarten study, if anyone around here still remembers that, but it would be part of the Ministry of Education's system.

The Chair: Sure. We would appreciate that.

Mr J. M. Johnson: I think we have to address the problem that we have a division between community colleges and universities, between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, but we are only dealing with one child, the child who starts into the system and should not be faced with this dilemma of different jurisdictions. There should be a continuity that they start out and they are treated as individuals. Anything that is learned about the child will be of benefit to him or her at an early age. They should have that opportunity to have that follow-through, because we have a problem in trying to determine which ministry is in charge. It does not make sense.

Dr Doxey: Let me maybe describe for you an interesting scenario of a sort of differentiated staffing or mixed training model. I ran into this two years ago when I was on sabbatical in the United Kingdom. In London, for example, there is a nursery school that, you might say—there is a program; I will call it that. It is a community-based program. It is housed in a community centre. It is a combination of a nursery school, a child care, a drop-in and a kindergarten.

What happens is that the school district does not have the space in the school for a kindergarten program, yet it has been determined that some of these children need this reception class experience. So they pay for the staff member to work in this centre to provide that education component or that continuity you are talking about. What we have then is a differentiated staffing team that has some sort of child care-trained people, some early childhood people who

have been trained through the educational system, but they are all working together on behalf of children and families in the one centre.

We seem to work with the philosophy that if you have different training, you have to work in different places. Even within a school, you have the child care beside the kindergarten; the staff is not meshed. Why can you not open the wall between those two rooms and do something about designating the sort of program planning authority to the different levels of training? I am not sure whether it is even the model that is being explored here, although I know there are some new pilots under way around this child care-early childhood collaboration.

Mr J. M. Johnson: You are talking about a system that fits the needs of the child rather than trying to slot the child into something that we have in place.

The Chair: Anyone else? I just have a couple of comments. First of all, thank you for appearing before us. This issue is going to be one I think the committee probably will be making some recommendations on, because it is really core to a lot of the debate that is going on out there. I do not, in a sense, realize whether or not it has been formally addressed by this committee or any other, but I think it is a case where perhaps traditionally society, as some of us growing up used to know society—that is, the two-parent family with the mother at home or the mother, in my case, out working, whatever you had started at kindergarten—anything else, such as day care, was really provided in the home.

I am wondering whether that is part of the problem, that a number of people maybe in my generation recognize that the teacher was the first contact and not the early childhood educator, and in fact, because that has changed, how fast are we reacting to that change in society? I just wonder whether that is where we really are, and try to explain perhaps some of the turf wars, credentialism or whatever else you want to call it. Perhaps that is why it has happened.

Dr Doxey: Yes, and I think we have also tried to apply sort of an industrial model here to children, the specialization of certification and working with old concepts in new times. Other people might have more accurate statistics than mine, but one recent one I heard was that only 16 per cent of our children now come from the kind of home you described—

The Chair: Exactly.

Dr Doxey: —with the mother at home, the brownies ready and the 2.2 children. That

probably is even less in many parts of this province.

I would like to just make maybe a couple of final remarks, if I may, again back on training issues.

The Chair: Please do.

Dr Doxey: Maybe I can do this by again being very specific about what happens to some of our Ryerson students and what has happened. We have this four-year degree program. We are not a community college, we are not a faculty of education and we are not really a university. Nobody knows exactly what we are, so they tend to ignore us altogether if they can.

1440

Over the past three or four years, increasingly our students are going to the faculties to pick up their Ontario teachers' certificate and their bachelor of education training. Yes, they are being driven by the salary challenge; we know that. But when that happens to them, some very interesting and odd things are taking place. In some cases those students are being given credit for some of the stuff they do in their undergraduate degree at Ryerson. In other cases they are not. In some cases our students have been able to get that post-faculty recognition for some of their Ryerson work if they know the right people to ask. In other cases they do not.

So there are many anomalies and inconsistencies in this whole system of credits. I would suggest that there needs to be some clearer guidelines. There needs to be some monitoring, or more careful monitoring, of exactly who can get credit for what and then what else you need to add on to that package of training or credit, relative to any qualifications and certifications.

The Chair: I recognize that. It always strikes me as odd when nurses take bedpan 101 and they use the same book, the same teacher, in some cases exactly the same notes, exactly everything the same, and because it is at a community college, they are not offered a university credit. That strikes me as very strange. That is another field, but I think it is the general way we do things in this province with universities and colleges and any relationships between Ryerson and other folks. Sometimes it is an advantage, though, would you not say, to have that unique status?

Dr Doxey: It is true. The thing is that I think we have the kinds of structures and framework here that would allow some flexibility to happen and allow some of those anomalies to be addressed without throwing the baby out with the bathwater and without maybe having to rebuild a

whole new system and to permit some more of this sort of interqualification bridging and adding on of extra specialization courses and that sort of thing. I think there is a lot of potential here.

Mrs O'Neill: Do your students have a very good success rate regarding entry to the faculties?

Dr Doxey: Yes. It does sometimes depend on which faculties, but yes, they do. But they do not find that any adjustments are made at the faculty level for anything that they come with, and that is one of their concerns. If there are any adjustments made, either in course requirements or course content, it is often after a lot of advocacy and individual negotiations.

Mrs O'Neill: But they are usually going in to become primary specialists.

Dr Doxey: No, not necessarily. They are usually just headed straight into the one-year bachelor of education programs. A lot of them do end up as primary specialists because they take the ministry add-on courses when they are finished, but they usually stay within the primary division, yes.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. I found them very interesting comments.

Dr Doxey: As I said, Mr Chairman, if there is any material that your group would find useful, perhaps before you have a visit down to our Ryerson program you could let us know what we could provide for you.

The Chair: We will work that out. Thank you very much. We appreciate it very much. I am looking forward to seeing your facility.

Dr Doxey: Thank you.

The Chair: I do not know if the people from the deaf society are here.

Clerk of the Committee: Yes, they are here. We are just waiting for their brief to be copied.

The Chair: Okay. I suggest that we take a 10-minute break, and then as soon as they are ready to set up, we will get everything handed out.

The committee recessed at 1444.

1457

The Chair: Okay. We have encouragement from both the Tories and the New Democratic Party to proceed. I hope by four o'clock I am not the only one left here, but in any event—

Mrs O'Neill: They have gone down to the insurance hearings. I went down too.

The Chair: Actually Cam Jackson has some people from his riding and that is why he will be late, but he asked us to proceed so we do not hold up our deputants and witnesses.

Ms Poole: Will Richard Johnston be here?

The Chair: No, he will not be here and he has given us permission to proceed as well. Jack Johnson will be back momentarily, but he said to proceed.

I would like to introduce Kevin Vrieze, the president of the Deaf Children's Society of Metro Toronto. You may proceed, sir?

DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY OF METRO TORONTO

Mr Vrieze: First, on behalf of the Deaf Children's Society of Metro Toronto, I would like to thank this committee for being given the opportunity to address the subject of early childhood education for the general population. As with everyone involved in this area, I have my own particular areas of concern, namely, the early education of deaf children in this case.

I believe, however, that there are overlaps here, that the philosophy of my organization and the implications which derive from it have some significant contributions to make to your considerations. Further, I think the issue of early education for the deaf child is closely linked to that of early education for hearing children in practice as well as philosophy.

You have before you a copy of both my remarks and the position paper of our group. On page 1, we discuss the philosophy of total communication as it applies to the nurturing and education of deaf children. Fundamental to this philosophy is the acknowledgement that every child has the right to understand and be understood. Then follows a partial list of the possibilities for use in developing language and, from it, communication and education. This paragraph is, I believe, crucial to this entire issue, that is, early childhood education, for a couple of reasons:

1. It acknowledges the fact that the goals of education do not derive from the adherence to any particular true model of education but rather from an awareness and an acceptance of the kind of things that can and do need to be done in order to obtain results in the educational environment. In terms of deaf early childhood education, it acknowledges the fact that because our children cannot hear, they will need nonspeech language input, such as American sign language, ASL, signed English, etc, in order to maximize first-language development.

2. It deals with a commonly held but none the less false assumption that the education of our deaf children and, by analogy, any child can be arranged or selected in a social vacuum. We believe in accepting our deaf children as they are rather than to try to change the irrevocable fact of their deafness and recognizing the necessity of establishing a bilingual household to accommodate them. For the nondeaf as well as the deaf child population, it means working with children as they are part of a continuum involving the parents and their home as well as the school.

Just to interject a personal example of what this involves is the issue of home visiting for deaf children. We had a program where a teacher came to visit us at home for one hour a week, which is first of all far too little, and it was a question of language competence. The first five teachers who came had absolutely no idea of sign language at all, manually coded English or ASL. We went to a sixth one who only lasted for a very short time. Then we had to go outside the Metro board to find someone who was competent in early childhood education as well as sign language. Sorry. You have a question?

The Chair: You can proceed and then we will have questions afterwards. I am sorry. I did not explain the format to you.

Mr Vrieze: Very good.

The unifying topic through both of these points is the crucial importance of first-language development in the zero to five age range. Much of this can be done passively for the hearing child, but life is not that simple in early childhood education for the deaf and, I submit here as well, for the population whose first language in the family is not English.

There will have to be a fine line in the future between what are now referred to as day care programs and the more structured environment of the day school. One cannot realistically expect children to sit at a desk and listen to formal class lectures at this age. Also, it is not fair to place upon the teaching staff the burden of being *de facto* parents.

Early childhood education must take place as part of a continuum of which the parent-family situation is the focus. This entails a close association and communication between the school and the parents. Teachers have their job, but so certainly do parents. Both need to do their part, but the problem is that generally parents are faced with a critical lack of resources. Either they are not given the tools to work with in terms of education for the general population or, in the case of deaf children, they just are not provided

with the tools with which they can learn. For them, a second language to work with their child is a first language.

Another aspect of what we see as this set of guidelines for early education is an awareness and acceptance of bilingualism in the child and its family. Toronto, and generally Ontario, is a very complex linguistic and culturally rich environment. As such, there is a higher percentage of children in this province whose first language is not English than there is in most other provinces.

This cultural diversity and the bilingualism that it has come to engender has recently come to be viewed, I think rightly, as a positive and exciting facet of this province. It needs to be remembered, however, that it was not that many years ago that the term "immigrant," especially referring to those not speaking English as a first language, was not viewed quite so positively. I should add here as well that this generally still becomes a term adopted with reference to deaf children who use sign language as a first language. There is that same kind of ethnicity.

Most important here is the issue in the educational environment of the relationship between intelligence and the command of spoken English. In terms of this discussion it is important to remember that differences in command of a given language do not necessarily reflect a presence or absence of intelligence.

Essentially what this comes down to is that schools need to dilute the term, anything relating to ethnicity, as a label for those children who do not use English as a first language and concentrate on functional bilingualism in these early ages as a goal. In doing so, the aim is for linguistic cognitive and cultural enrichment for all the students in an early education program.

This in turn would further develop linguistic and cultural pluralism, which we believe makes Ontario one of the most exciting places in North America to raise children. Also, the use of bilingualism would provide a bridge to attaining fluency in English, even as a second language. This works out with the deaf because the first language has to be sign.

Certainly there are linguistic burdens here for the teaching staff in schools or in early childhood education, but I stress that they neither can nor should work in a social and cultural vacuum, as I mentioned earlier. Parents need to do their job so that teachers can do theirs, but in the case of deaf education, teachers of the deaf need to become fluent in sign and it is reasonable enough when dealing with families who have other than

English as a first language to expect fluency there as well.

This in turn brings up the issue mentioned somewhat earlier of support services for parents, which can range from simple meetings to discuss progress and achievement of their children to language support services in the form of interpreters or possibly even instruction for the parents themselves in another given language. While this may sound like a tremendous task to undertake, I hasten to point out that many of the resources for this kind of project are already available and community associations could also be enlisted to utilize the possibilities in this respect.

Parents also, as part of this communication process with the school, need educational counselling, in the case of the deaf from the moment they walk out of the hospital from diagnosis; in the case of the hearing population probably from the day they walk into the school, simply to keep the communication open and to maximize the efficiency of the educational environment.

Finally, let me observe that if education is a success at this level of early childhood, subsequent efforts by the school systems of this province will show consistently higher levels of education, which will have rewards for this province far in excess of any expense incurred. Certainly it is a kind of leap of faith to make this statement since no economic results can be seen for some time, but the price of not undertaking this sort of program is currently observable in the general lack of interest in education by students at the secondary and primary levels.

We in the Deaf Children's Society of Metro Toronto feel our children are worth the effort; all children are worth the effort. If there was ever a time to give them an interest in language and education as the key to their future and that of this province, it is now, at this age.

Any questions?

The Chair: We have two indicating questions.

Mrs O'Neill: I wondered if you would say a little bit more about the home visiting that you seem to have been personally involved in. Is that something that all parents of deaf children are involved in? It is not subsidized, I presume, but paid for by you individually. How does it operate? Is it a general kind of—what should I say?—supplement to the regular school system that most parents of deaf children engage in?

Mr Vrieze: It is a little bit of everything that you just said. There are parts of it—the one-week visit that happens was then and is now, I think,

still subsidized by the local board of education. The problem, of course, arose with—even when we found out that the teacher was not competent—

Mrs O'Neill: You mean once a week? You said, "one week."

Mr Vrieze: One hour, once a week. That much of it was subsidized by the board of education. When we went outside the board because of the ECE plus language competence that we were after, the board of education still funded that one-hour-a-week visit. However, one hour a week simply is not enough, especially at that zero to five age range, so we decided that we needed to supplement it with extra language stimulation, with counselling. Those meetings, which amounted to another three or four a week, we had to finance ourselves. Some we did through networking and connections; for some of it we just had to find the bucks. In the case where we hired an interpreter, it cost \$20 an hour. She came twice a week. God bless the bourgeoisie.

1510

Not everyone is that fortunate, but the result comes with a child who is fluent in the language, and that is a problem that all hearing parents of deaf children face. I would think it is a problem that anybody who has a kid whose first language is not English is going to have to deal with. It is a situation that has to be addressed when you consider things like early childhood education. That extra language stimulation is really what it all hinges on.

Mrs O'Neill: Does your society function by itself or do you belong to other groups, such as Voice for Hearing Impaired Children?

Mr Vrieze: Voice is the loyal opposition for us. Not so loyal sometimes.

Mrs O'Neill: They are the loyal opposition, okay.

Mr Vrieze: The Deaf Children's Society of Metro Toronto is part of a provincial organization called the Deaf Children's Society of Ontario. There are other provincial organizations. There is the Deaf Children's Society of Alberta and the Deaf Children's Society of British Columbia. There is not yet a national federation such as there is in the United States, the American Society of Deaf Children. It does not yet exist in Canada. It is provincial.

Mrs O'Neill: If you can accept my lack of knowledge, your society deals in the total communication then, both signing and verbal, up to the child's ability.

Mr Vrieze: Signing and speech is perhaps a better way to phrase it, since we do feel that sign language is a verbal language but not speech.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sorry. I do not know the terms.

Mr Vrieze: It recognizes the fact that there are two languages, sometimes three, to be dealt with and it is important to accept both and to arrange linguistic and cultural bridges so that children can learn both.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sure you have examined quite thoroughly the report of the advisory committee that the minister—

Mr Vrieze: Oh, yes, with a couple of magnifying glasses.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you quite happy with that?

Mr Vrieze: I think it is a good basis from which to begin work. I think that a lot can be done in developing from it.

Mrs O'Neill: It did bring together some pretty different people who came up with the report.

Mr Vrieze: It was no small task.

Mrs O'Neill: No. I was pretty happy, and the pilot project with the American sign language no doubt would make you happy.

Mr Vrieze: Yes. In fact, I think that tomorrow would not be too soon to start that, or even this afternoon if you could manage it, but schools are already out.

The other side of that is, though, that I think it is a question of maximizing resources. A lot of things that happen in the Metro school for the deaf in town and the regional schools outside of Toronto—I think the speaker before me was noting that there tends to be a lot of bureaucratic separatism going on here, that the resources which could be brought to bear to maximize all the early childhood education are not.

You have got a little pocket here that is funded for the deaf kids, you have got a little pocket here that is funded for one small community of hearing kids and it gets separated like that, so that a lot of money gets spent that need not necessarily be spent in that fashion. You could maximize those resources, it seems to me. That is one of the reasons I am here. I think you could have a quite successful and a somewhat leaner and meaner organization, if that is the way to phrase it.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you bring in role models for your society? The reason I ask that is that I have had rather continuing contact with a deaf student who just graduated from Trent called Kim Pape, who has really made her mark in work with the disabled and is now working with the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped here in Toronto. I have no idea what the philosophy was,

whether she was from the deaf children's society or from Voice. I have no idea which of those two her parents were active in, but she certainly is a very great role model for deaf children.

Mr Vrieze: One of the things the deaf children's society does is recognize the fact—90 per cent of the parents in the deaf children's society are hearing and 90 per cent of the kids are deaf. So part of that continuity is that it does not really matter if, for example, your acquaintance is oral deaf or signing deaf, it almost does not really matter, because you need the perception of that continuity, that no matter who you are, somehow it will work.

The problem arises for our group in the perception that other groups such as Voice for Hearing Impaired Children do not allow the options. That is really a kind of crucial word for us. The options and the resources—whatever works for the kid, use it. If it does not work, who needs it?

Mrs O'Neill: Are you a member of the special education advisory committee?

Mr Vrieze: Yes.

Ms Poole: Just before I go to the question I originally planned to ask, I am kind of intrigued by some of the things you alluded to about Voice. We have been quite sensitized on this committee to problems that the hearing-impaired children and their families have faced because of a number of presentations Voice has made to the committee. You seem to allude to the fact that there was some friction, or certainly different viewpoints, between the two organizations. I just wonder if you could elaborate on whether there is a philosophical difference or you just both have your own way of dealing with things.

Mr Vrieze: We have points of agreement and points of disagreement. I will sort of jump in the middle. Traditionally, at the risk of seeming like back fence gossip here, Voice started with the belief that the paramount importance of education was to learn English speech. The philosophical position of our group, my group, is that it is of paramount importance to learn communication, a language. Whether that is English or sign language is not so important. Communication is really the thing.

For deaf kids, because they cannot hear, sign language seems to be the most efficient and useful language for the child and for the people communicating with him or her. After that, English is fine. Or in conjunction with that, English is fine. It is not really so much a question of one or the other first. The Voice brochure,

however, points out even now that English is the first choice and thereafter you move to other choices such as sign language. For that reason, we have a serious philosophical difference of opinion.

We both agree that there should be options and that you cannot sort of set up a formula that will work for every child. There is no true model, as I mentioned earlier. Where we differ is in how those options should be applied, or should be presented, even. That is a problem because now, when the parents of a child walk into even the Hospital for Sick Children, it is still presented as speech and English first and anything else second unless other situations are brought to bear. That we see as a problem. You use whatever works for the kid.

Ms Poole: I appreciate your explaining that difference. Now to go back to what I was originally going to ask you, what early childhood education programs are there that you are aware of—this can be in the community colleges, the faculty of education or Ryerson—where they are actually training teachers not only in ECE but also in dealing with deaf children or hearing-impaired children. Are you aware of specialized programs like this?

Mr Vrieze: I know that there are a number of ECE programs, most of which are quite good as far as they go.

Ms Poole: But ECE programs where they are specifically attuned to the deaf, or just generally?

Mr Vrieze: I do not know of any in particular in Ontario. I know that there are a number of ECE teachers who have gone through the program and have learned sign language, which is really the only difference that needs to take place in the program because once you have the communication, the rest of it applies as given.

Those teachers, to my knowledge, undertook that activity and that effort on their own. There have been some changes and I do not know how they apply, honestly, to the ECE program at Sheridan College. What direct application it has to the ECE program, as I say, I do not know. I know that there are a number of ECE programs geared to the deaf that happen in the United States. I know that there has been greater sensitivity given in the last round of hearings in terms of special education, but it is equally true that there have not been any changes in the curriculum for primary and secondary school teacher education. As far as I know, there have not been any changes, either, in ECE.

1520

Ms Poole: That is exactly what I wanted to know, whether there was a comprehensive program where someone would be trained not only in ECE, not only in communication, but also in picking up some of the outlying problems a child might have because he is deaf or have psychological, emotional problems, that type of thing. What you are basically saying is there is nothing in Ontario of that nature. It would be simply a matter of a teacher who had been in the ECE program then taking the initiative to go and learn the communication.

Mrs O'Neill: Mr Chairman, as a point of information with respect to the recommendations that have come out of the advisory committee on education for the deaf is that teachers in faculties of education be given this kind of training.

Mr Vrieze: For the teachers already in the system, it is a question of studying it, and there has been a suggestion that the curriculum be changed, yes, but that is at the primary and secondary level. There is no real mention made in that report for preschool; that is to say, zero to five.

Mrs O'Neill: No, that is true, but the faculties—

Mr Vrieze: That is really the crucial issue, because that is where first-language development happens, and if you do not catch it there, then you spend the rest of the educational career doing remedial stuff. That is why it is so, so important. It just cannot be overemphasized. If ECE programs are going to deal with deaf kids, if they are going to deal with environments where the first language is not English, they have got to be familiar with the languages that they are going to be dealing with in the family or, in the case of deafness, with the children themselves.

Ms Poole: Thank you.

Mr Vrieze: I do not know if that really answers clearly what you are getting at.

Ms Poole: Yes, your answer is very helpful. Thank you.

Mr Neumann: Coming from the city of Brantford, where Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone—

Mr Vrieze: Yes, and his wife was hard of hearing.

Mr Neumann: His wife was deaf, and—

Mr Vrieze: Hard of hearing.

Mr Neumann: Hard of hearing?

Mr Vrieze: Yes.

Mr Neumann: He was a teacher of the deaf, was working on a way to develop instruments for

hearing and that is how he ended up inventing the telephone.

Mr Vrieze: Great hearing aid.

Mr Neumann: My question relates to the development of technology and how changing technology is affecting the teaching of deaf children and the ability of any deaf person to communicate to the world around.

Mr Vrieze: Certainly in the last 10 or 15 years, I am not quite sure—I think it is about 15 years, max—we have seen remarkable jumps in technology. We have gone from the old clunker—in terms of deaf communication, hearing-impaired communication, however you would like to phrase it—gone from having a teletype, which looked like a slightly shrunken mailbox with a typewriter keyboard on it that sounded just terrible and was slow and not always so effective, to a sort of portable computer effort, which is just remarkable. It means you do not have to speak in order to use the phone system. Soon—if you go to Japan you can even do it now. They have picture phones, in which case someone who signs would just get on the screen, as it were.

My daughter continues to wear hearing aids. She is profoundly deaf. Most of the deaf kids who I know also use hearing aids. How much good it does or does not do is debatable, but the point is it seems to help a little bit, and for that reason, why not? If it helps, use it. It is the same with any technology and need not necessarily apply to anything derived specifically for the deaf or any other linguistic minority.

The point that has to be mentioned, and I think perhaps even stressed, is that there is no technological sort of solution to what is essentially a nontechnological situation. Otherwise, you would just have a tape and you would put the kids to bed, play the tape in their ears and they would be magically educated. It does not work like that. It is the same thing with technology. A lot of it can make it really efficient and really interesting and be a massive help for communication, but it is by no means a solution to, or an alternative to, education.

Mr Neumann: No.

Mr Vrieze: That is one of the problems with our friend Alexander. He tended to think that if you could develop a hearing aid or some sort of speech-encouragement device, you would, in effect, cure deafness. It just does not work like that.

I have a friend who is a theoretical biologist and he thinks that maybe in 15 to 20 years they will have ways to regenerate nerves. Maybe then;

who knows? In any case, it is not something you can count on. It is a little bit like thinking, "If I pick the right numbers next week, I'll win the lottery." It may be, but you just cannot count on something like that.

Mr Neumann: If I could summarize your answer: In terms of education, technology has not made a big difference yet.

Mr Vrieze: It has helped. No, it has helped.

Mr Neumann: But in terms of communication, one person to another over the telephone—

Mr Vrieze: It is still one person to another.

Mr Neumann: I am familiar with the new telephone system that deaf people are using and it is quite remarkable.

Mr Vrieze: Yes, and it has made it more efficient.

Mr Neumann: I suppose even the invention of a fax machine where you can communicate very quickly in writing by telephone instantly.

Mr Vrieze: But fax machines are still somewhat of a rarity. Obviously, they will come to be more frequently used, but—

Mr Neumann: Not in the world in which we live.

Mr Vrieze: Yes. All those things help, and to the extent that they help, they should be used. But they are not a cure and they are not a substitute for education.

Mr Neumann: Do I have time for a second question? My second question relates to the challenges of teaching the multiple problem of a child who is deaf but also has another problem such as a vision problem.

Mr Vrieze: Deaf and something else, cerebral palsy or vision.

Mr Neumann: Do you have any thoughts for us on that area?

Mr Vrieze: A lot of it depends, in the case of the school environment, on the sensitivity of the teacher to the given student. Most people with CP can hear just fine. The problem comes with their response, whether they have to use a Bliss board or a computer and a modem, that kind of thing, or they use one of those little headbands with the lights that focus on it. To that extent, yes, technology may play a slightly higher part percentagewise in terms of the communication circuit, if that is quite the right word.

Beyond that, again, it is the teacher who really needs to be sensitive to how the communication works. It may take a long time to point out one letter at a time on an ABC board or even on a

Bliss board, but it sort of comes with the territory.

Mr Neumann: Where does your organization stand on the raging, burning issue of integration into the mainstream of education versus specialized—

Mr Callahan: It is on page 5.

Mr Vrieze: Yes. Page 5 of our statement makes some reference to that. It depends on what you mean by "mainstreaming." I think it is a way to summarize what is going on here. If, by "mainstreaming," you mean putting a deaf child, in the case of our experience, in a hearing class, specifically a signing deaf child in a hearing class, with the idea that this will somehow maximize the child's speech, all you are succeeding in doing is causing massive isolation for that child and a really negative attitude about education. That kind of mainstreaming defeats the purpose of why the child is there.

1530

If you put a child, deaf and with CP, in a classroom with the appropriate support services, then you have something that approaches more integration, and to add on to what is already written in here, I do not think it would be too aversive, in the case of some school systems that are joined—my daughter goes to a school for the deaf, the other half of which is the school for hearing kids—or unusual, in my view, to bring some of the hearing kids into the deaf class under the same circumstances.

They have been doing it to a lesser degree actually, to a significant degree, I understand, recently in the separate school system, that kind of integration where you can move back and forth so long as the communication possibilities are there to ask questions, to overhear what the other kids are saying, because a lot of education does happen when you hear what other kids in the class are saying rather than just what the teacher says. That is important and you tend to lose it in mainstreaming. It has to be sort of safeguarded in any integration environment.

While I think of it, you were talking before about technology and communication. There is this new thing of computer-aided speech development. Personally, outside of my group, I tend to favour sign language more than speech because sign language is the first language. However, my daughter does go to these computer-aided speech classes and she is verbalizing and developing confidence in English quite remarkably because the feedback system there does not depend necessarily on being able to hear, which she

cannot do. It uses visual, tactile and all the rest of it, things that she can do. It emphasizes the positive here so that second-language development is going along quite nicely.

This is another way of saying there are pluses for the technology.

The Chair: Seeing no questions, I thank you very much being with us. I think you shed a lot of light on our deliberations and I appreciate the fact that you took the time to be with us today. I hope when you receive the report that some of the elements of it reflect some of the things you were bringing up with us today. Thank you again.

We were told that Ellen Regan is on her way. I suggest that we take another short break, given that, and you can probably come back by 10 minutes to four, just to make sure, in case she has any information to hand out or whatever, and we can do that at this point.

Mrs O'Neill: It is most unusual to give groups that are not provincially representative one hour. Everything we have for next week is a one-hour presentation. I have never seen this before, either for individuals or even for associations that are not at least provincially representative.

Mr Neumann: It gives you lots of room to ask questions.

Mrs O'Neill: I know it gives you lots of room to ask questions, but we all have very tight schedules and now, twice today, we see that half an hour likely would have been enough. We are not here to fill time; we are here to do a job.

The Chair: I do appreciate that, but I think in starting out we perhaps have not had as tight a schedule as we could have had. But at the same time, we are entering new territory and it may be important to make sure that we have given enough time as well as fitting in as many people as we could into the discussion, given the tight time frame. We will try to tighten that up in future when we press on.

Mrs O'Neill: I hope it is not setting a precedent, because other committees are going to be criticized and I know mine is going to be one of them, because we do not give an hour. As I say, this is a new precedent.

The Chair: I do not think it is a precedent. I think it really reflects a better practice that we are taking, given the reasons I have explained in this one instance. I do not think that is going to be repeated very often. I appreciate the fact that at some points we also have people who are unable to make it for the full period of time we expect they will. I will take your comments to heart and try in the future to tighten it up.

We have 10 to four, if you would come back by that time.

The committee recessed at 1535.

1547

The Chair: Just before we get started, so that you can get settled a bit and get your head together, a couple of things have been raised that I would like to bring up with the committee.

One is that because of the issue raised on credentialism and some of the debate between early childhood educators who are college trained, if I can use that term, and teachers who are university trained, we should invite some officials from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to join in this credentialism debate and that we would try to make arrangements to have somebody from MCU who is conversant in the whole issue deal with it. We are undertaking to look into the viability of doing that.

The second thing is that we are putting in for a reprint of 500 copies of the third report. A number of us are getting calls and we will try to prorate them. We have to replace some that we scooped on the first round for parties and for members. If you can forbear with myself and Tannis, we will try to distribute them equitably as the need arises. We now are getting people wanting numbers of copies of that. Just to keep you up to date on that, we will continue with that situation.

I would like to introduce Ellen Regan, professor of education, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Perhaps we can turn it over to you and you can proceed. I appreciate your coming in a bit earlier than we had scheduled you for, but we are on a shorter schedule, so we are able to start a little earlier and we thank you.

DR ELLEN REGAN

Dr Regan: When I was asked to come here, my understanding was that you would like me to address some of the key developments and major issues in early childhood education, with particular attention to these developments and issues as they relate to early practice in Ontario. I have prepared something, but if I raise an issue you would like me to talk more about, just interrupt me and I will try to address your concerns.

The Chair: What we are trying to do in each situation is to make the statement, whatever it is, and then develop questions as they occur.

Dr Regan: In the last quarter century probably the key development in the field has been extending the sphere of early childhood educa-

tion programs and services. For many years early childhood was thought to encompass the years from three to eight, but in the past 20 to 25 years the concerns of the field have expanded to include the care and development of infants on the one hand, and on the other hand education and support of parents with respect to their child-rearing roles.

The child development research of the 1950s and 1960s that led to thinking and talking about the early years as critical, not only to development but also to later learning, led to the establishment, for example, of infant stimulation programs for so-called at-risk babies. These were babies at risk for some perceived reason, either physical or environmental. Then even babies who were not at risk became a concern with the increasing demands for child care and care for infants as well.

What is particularly pertinent to our present situation now also are the early intervention programs of the 1960s and 1970s. These were programs principally for four-year-old and five-year-old children. The data that comes from those programs points out the very critical role of parents in supporting learning, and out of that some notion that in many cases parents need some kind of support in order to fulfil their role.

Certainly another development and one that is centre stage now in the field pertains to programs and services provided by schools for care and education of children, including in-school child care for school-age children, which is probably right now the hottest topic in Canada. There was a conference in Montreal in October that addressed this issue. For all of these things, all of these developments I have just mentioned we see evidence of here in Ontario.

In some communities we see infant stimulation programs and we also see infant care in some of the group day care centres. I think infant care is particularly accommodated in employer-supported child care, places such as Sunnybrook Medical Centre and what is proposed for the new Scotia Plaza day care centre.

Although parent education started out being characteristic of programs—these are early intervention programs—other parents soon made it known that they would like some programs provided for them. That also has occurred, not only in day care centres but in the development in Ontario of these parent-child and family resource centres. We have many of those throughout the province.

I brought up, and gave the source to Bob Gardner—when the early primary education

project of a couple of years ago was in operation, Ada Scherman and I looked at a couple of these centres simply to give descriptive information about them. They keep growing in all areas of the province, both in urban and rural areas. Child care in the school now probably rivals the parent-child centres as being the innovation that is being picked up by so many boards. This is not just day care in the school for two-year-olds, three-year-olds and four-year-olds; this is care for children four to 12 and before school and after school hours.

There is a document you might also be interested in. It is an old study, "Day Care and the Canadian School System." It was a study by the Canadian Education Association and many of the issues that are being raised now are sort of flagged in this report. It talks about a new role for the schools, an expanded role for schools if they get into child care.

There is also a very good policy that has been developed by the Toronto Board of Education that also addresses concerns in bringing care into the school for children that operates both before and after school hours. There are a number of issues that are associated with these developments, as well as with programs and services that have been in operation for some time.

Before I get into those, I would just like to touch briefly on some of the features of early education as it has evolved, because I think you will see how many of the issues that we are facing now have their origin in some histories of practice.

Nursery and kindergarten education, for example, developed from different roots and with different purposes. Sometimes when people talk about early education now that seems to get muddled a bit, but in North America nursery education developed basically at two levels, private nurseries and public nurseries, which we now more or less know under the label of day care.

Although nursery practice has changed over the years, both nursery education and day care programs are associated with a tradition of practice that gives primary attention to the physical and emotional development of children. This is a concern that is not far removed from the British nursery school movement of the 19th century which has had such an impact on nursery education and day care in North America. We in North America are more influenced by that British nursery movement than, for example, by the work of Montessori that was going on at the same time in Italy.

Kindergarten, on the other hand, I think most people know from the title, had its origins in Germany in the work of Friedrich Froebel. Kindergarten is sometimes talked about as a child of the industrial revolution. It certainly did grow in this period, when in Europe there was a great move from an agrarian lifestyle where children received all their care and education at home to the movement of the population into cities.

Certainly the kindergarten provided a care situation in these cities where people were in factories, but at the same time Froebel also was concerned with developing a program that had activities that attended very much to children's fine motor development, and in a sense was preparing them for making their living in the industrial situation, either as bookkeepers or working with the kind of co-ordination they would need to work on machinery and this sort of thing. Froebel saw kindergarten, in his own words, as a balance between the child's freedom to be himself or herself and what he called the obligations of society; in other words, a sort of balance between expressive-type activities and a more skill-oriented program.

I think these roots of practice help to explain why in Ontario and in many political jurisdictions we still have the care and education of children under two ministries. Of course day care as a rule has broadened both its concerns and its clientele in the past few years, just as kindergarten as a rule periodically changes its focus more or less according to the educational *Zeitgeist* of the time. You have a period when there is a great deal of stress on expressive development of children and then another period when there will be more of a skills orientation.

The other thing that I think is important to policy and practice development and decisions now is another historical fact, and that is the evolution of three different perspectives on the purpose, the content and the methods of early care and education. These are talked about using different terms in the literature, but I think one of the most helpful ones is where they are talked about as three streams of psychoeducational thought. What you have here is that each stream is more or less associated with a particular theory of development and learning. However, these three streams are probably most distinguished by the differences they espouse in terms of goals and in terms of method.

1600

Where people from the different streams tend to differ is not so much on the whole package of goals, but on which goals should be emphasized

and which programs. We see a lot of this in the argument between emphasis on social and emotional development versus intellectual development. There is even greater controversy, however, surrounding program content and methods. There is a tremendous amount of debate that centres on the role of the teacher, particularly how and how much a teacher should intervene in a child's activities in the early education setting.

Very few people argue the polar positions. Very few people will say, "Left to his or her own devices, the child will educate himself or herself," and very few people will say, "A child never learned anything that a teacher didn't tell him." In between those poles there is a tremendous amount of room still for controversy. Unfortunately, some parents and educators take an either/or approach on this.

We can find this out by reading the paper; at least once a week someplace this comes up, that the children either play or they learn how to read. This is unfortunate because it is a kind of dichotomy that does not need to exist, or people talk about process and product, which is an even sillier distinction because you have to get a process towards a product and you do not have process in some kind of a vacuum. To my view, all of this thinking and talking is very dysfunctional because they talk about things as if they were mutually exclusive when in fact they are not.

This state of affairs is believed by many in the field to focus on the need for a sound theory of practice. Some people present theories of development as if they were theories of practice, which they are not. Theories that hypothesize about how children learn do not tell us what to do with children in early education settings.

Having given that quick, over-a-couple-of-centuries update to where we are now, what I would like to talk about now is a particular situation in Ontario. I believe there are three developments or events that have served as catalysts in identifying the major issues in early education in Ontario. I see these as the current child care provisions in schools, the question of junior kindergarten and proposals for full-day kindergarten. All of these issues that I am going to talk about interact, but I think maybe I can explore them a little bit more with you if I identify them one by one.

The two major ones I see and would like to discuss most are what I would call the continuity issue and the quality issue. I would also like to touch on special-needs children. From what was

said before, I think you have already talked about teacher education, but I would just like to say a few things about that and then parent involvement.

The continuity issue is rooted in the fact that increasing numbers of four-year-olds and three-year-olds in this province are having some kind of an organized out-of-home experience before they ever go to school. I think if I tell you about the experiences of some four-year-olds, it will illustrate this.

Some four-year-old children are dropped off at the day care centre in the morning. They may move then to the junior kindergarten. After school, they may go back to the day care centre or they may go to some kind of an in-school day care program. The important question here, of course, is how well the expectations for children throughout the day and the kinds of experiences that they have complement each other across settings.

I can give you an example. A student in one of my classes was interested in this and went out and followed a cohort of children who were having this experience through the day. It was in December a couple of years ago. In the morning day care, the new activity of the day that was introduced was making Christmas decorations. The children went to kindergarten and junior kindergarten in the afternoon and the activity introduced that day was making Christmas decorations. The children went on to the after-school day care and the surprise of the afternoon was making Christmas decorations.

A little girl turned to the student and she said, "I'm so tired of making these Christmas decorations." This is the kind of possibility that does exist. School boards, I find, differ in the extent to which they try to co-ordinate what is happening within the school, and it is even more difficult when you are receiving children from a centre that may be down the street.

The other thing we have in terms of jurisdiction is children moving between the responsibility of two different ministries as they are going through the day.

Another aspect of this problem is the honest concern of teachers and many ministry personnel. They have honest concerns about what they perceive as the pressure from some parents who push children in kindergarten into an academically oriented program because they have had one or two years of day care.

On the other hand, there is the danger that I already noted with the Christmas decorations, and one that has just been documented in a study

in Quebec where there is repetition of programming, there is redundancy between day care, say, and junior kindergarten. Sometimes when I am in kindergartens I hear children say: "My day care teacher taught me how to do that. I already know that." Sometimes the response was: "Do you? Well, we're going to do it again." I think these are the kinds of things we really have to be concerned about.

Continuity issues also relate to what happens year to year and not just day to day. This is not just a problem in Ontario. The literature of the field is talking quite a bit about the need to rethink kindergarten just for the reasons I have outlined: the fact that so many young children are having out-of-home experiences so much earlier, the fact that people are afraid people are either going to push them too much on the one hand or bore them to death on the other.

I think where we really have a focus for this question is in the proposals we have for full-day kindergarten programming. There is a danger that we could take a half day and simply stretch it out into a full day.

Inherent in this continuity issue, of course, is clarifying at the policy level what we see as the purposes of organized care in education for children at different ages. I feel very strongly that we need the kinds of policies that will provide a framework for these programs and services. Many of us are in a position now where we have it before we really have anything to serve as a guideline.

The other issue I find of paramount importance is the quality issue. We read this a lot in the paper. What do people want? They want quality child care; they want quality school programs. At one level, the bottom line with young children is health and safety concerns: within the day care, is it hygienic? Is it safe? In the school, the same thing: Is it a safe environment psychologically and physically? Are the toys in good shape? Is the equipment okay? Do we have ways of dealing with ill children? Do we have ways of dealing with children who are hurt?

Beyond these basic needs, we have some—not much, but we have some—evidence from research that in child care settings a favourable teacher-child ratio, trained staff, and I hope my voice underlines that, and parent involvement are all associated with quality child care when quality is defined as promoting language development and better readiness and adjustment for school.

However, when the issue of quality turns on defining the best program or approach to learning and development, especially in kindergarten and in the early primary years, quality can become a matter of opinion, just as beauty is sometimes in the eye of the beholder. Early education is very heavy on claims; what some writers talk about as myths and assertions. What we are very light on is hard evidence or data.

There is a good reason for this, because the kind of research that you need to see—is program X better, and for whom, than program Y?—is very, very expensive research, in order to identify both short-term and long-term effects. What evidence we do have is evidence from the early intervention programs I mentioned earlier on. We do have some evidence from these programs for at-risk four- and five-year-olds. Remember, these children are alike at least in terms of being perceived to be at risk. But what data we have tell us that no single program or method has been demonstrated to be equally effective for all children at a given age.

The other very telling piece of research from that, in my view, is that different programs are differentially effective in different areas. In other words, if we could prove program A was excellent in downtown Toronto to achieve these goals for five-year olds, we might find in Peterborough, Timmins, Sudbury or London that a different program might be effective. This makes sense if you think about it and you think about the notion of individual differences. We all recognize that 10-year-old and five-year-old children are different, not only in stature but in what they are interested in, what they are able to do, their social development and everything else. Five-year-olds are not all alike either. I get really concerned when people tell me what is developmentally appropriate for five-year-olds. I want to ask them, "For what five-year-olds and what are the goals you are working at?"

Kindergarten teachers will tell you that some children come bombing into kindergarten and they are reading. They have taught themselves to read, they are ready. Others come in and there is no way they are ready. They cannot even hold a pencil. There is no way they should be placed in any kind of a reading group or anything of that kind.

There is a lot of talk in the field about child-centred education. Child-centredness is probably at this time best defended as a philosophy of education rather than as a particular approach. However, one of the things I brought along, and I believe Bob distributed, is

some work that a colleague, Otto Weininger, and I did. We are just trying to scratch this. This is not very systematic research. It is exploratory research. We are trying to set out to say, "Can we try to get into this and see if there are indeed any generalizations we could put forward that would be flexible enough to address different needs of different children in different settings?"

What I see as one of the implications of this quest for quality is the need to develop alternative programs and ways of organizing and delivering caring education for children. I think we really need to think seriously about that.

I have talked about developmental differences of children. I just would like to say something about some other special needs that I see. Certainly in the cities of Ontario, I think we have to think about these children coming into school for whom the language of the school is not their first language. We also have the issue of integrating children who are learning-disabled or physically handicapped.

I think we could learn something from people in the day care field on this question. There is an organization in Toronto that is doing some work on that. Dr Kathleen Brophy at Guelph has been working on integrating handicapped children into child care for some time, and I think that people who are experimenting with this at the child care level may have something to offer us in terms of educational programming.

Teacher training I guess you have already touched on, so you know that the issues here are who needs what to work with whom. This seems to be the basic training issue, having really three different groups involved in training teachers in Ontario. I see a training need, and I am talking from the perspective of someone who has people coming to me to work in a master of education program. We have people who have gone through one route or the other, but they have ended up with an Ontario teachers' certificate, some of them actually from the community colleges, then they have gone to Ryerson, then to the faculty of education and then they come to OISE, which seems to be somewhat of a popular route now.

I think one of the needs here is to beef up child development training. I feel people are not getting a good background in child development. They are getting a background in advocacy—this is a good program, that is a bad program; this is a good approach, that is a bad approach—rather than having the kind of solid background in child development I think they need.

Finally, just to touch on parent involvement, I do not think we have even begun to realize what an issue this is or is going to be, and that is the extent to which parents are going to have input into program decisions. Some of the more dramatic ones have hit the press, of course, but I think that many parents who are involved in these day care centres and are making some input into how these programs are run are just not going to sit back and forget about it when their children go into kindergarten. So I think this is something that is going to come up. This is really an interesting and fascinating time to be involved in early education in Ontario.

If I could just say a couple of things before I close, I think several things are needed to address these issues. I think the one that is needed more than anything else—and with my coming from OISE, you will not be surprised to hear me say this—is carefully designed and systematic research in early childhood studies and research that involves teachers as well as parents. Although I was involved in doing this, we do not need any more of this kind of research. This serves a purpose. It brings in some information. We need systematic research on program effects.

I think we also badly need the development of alternative programs that indeed we can study. I do not think we need to import programs from the United States or anywhere else; I think we need programs that meet our needs here.

I also think at the top of my list would be a plea for eventually a good trained staff working with our children. I hesitate to say this, because I come from a field that is full of nice little sayings and platitudes, but I really do think we recognize that our children are our future and deserve the best we can give them.

Mrs O'Neill: I really did enjoy your presentation. It was extremely well balanced. You gave us that day in the life of a four-year-old. I wanted to verify that you said 75 per cent of four-year-olds entering—

Dr Regan: No, I did not give you a percentage. I said there are many four-year-olds now. The numbers keep increasing all the time. As the day care provisions increase, there are more and more children in out-of-home care.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess without a percentage my questions are going to take a different twist. In some of those, and I am presuming 30 per cent and that is right off the top of my head, the parents are involved in that preschool education.

1620

Dr Regan: They are in a number of ways. They are involved sometimes on the board. They

will sit on the boards of these centres and they will input, decide what is going on.

A lot of centres also have evening programs for parent education. Parent education, I should say, covers a variety of topics. In some cases it will have to do with finances, how to handle your finances, particularly for single parents who may be having a tough time. Most of the parents want to know about drugs; they want to talk, even at the preschool age, about drugs and what is being done. They want to talk about reading. Everybody always wants to talk about reading. "Are they going to be able to read?" That kind of thing.

Whatever they want to talk about, these boards try to be responsive and the care givers try to be responsive and talk about it. The same thing goes on in these parent-child resource centres, some of which I think do a magnificent job because they also allow care givers to come in and work. You will see the people who try to work with the care givers to educate themselves about how to work with the children. We have been giving them things to take home to do with each other.

Mrs O'Neill: I had the opportunity to go to that convention, and I thought they were an outstanding group of people.

Dr Regan: Yes, they really are.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you feel from your perspective, and you have a pretty good opportunity to look things across the province, that with all this—what should I say?—downsizing or down-aging or whatever you want to call it, formalization of children entering systems, whatever they be, that we are improving our identification and then, obviously, what goes along with identification, remediation?

Dr Regan: In my experience the identification is improved, particularly in some sorts of physical problems that might not be picked up right away. I am thinking of minimal hearing loss and this sort of thing. I think those are picked up. I am less convinced that they are addressed all the time, that either we have the staff to do it or people have the wherewithal to do it. I think it can be done, but I am not sure that the provisions are made accordingly.

Mrs O'Neill: In my small experience it is much more difficult to get assistance into the child care centre than it is in the school.

Dr Regan: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: And parents have a lot of difficulty with that, because I think, as you hinted, there is not the strict definition in their minds that there is in the minds of ourselves or of bureaucrats about jurisdiction.

Dr Regan: I think that is true. The other thing is that there is some thought many times that children are going to grow out of things, you know, that it is strictly a developmental problem. I have some sensitivity to this, because in another life I was a speech therapist and I know people were always—a child who says "wed wabbit" at three is not a problem; a child who is inarticulate at three is a problem, and he is not going to grow out of it if you cannot make him talk when he is three. So I think that that is a much more grey area in child care.

The Chair: Do you know how many family resource centres there are across the province or the community?

Dr Regan: I did know, but I do not have it right at my fingertips. It is in the EPEP document, I am pretty sure, with the Ministry of Education—at least in 1985, and how many more—I have not kept up with it.

The Chair: I appreciate that. Thanks. The other question deals with the routes people take to get to their masters of education. One such route for students from community colleges, certainly in northern Ontario, is going to American schools. They get straight acceptance of all our credits, given that other areas are the same, and then they come back for BEds or masters that way. In northern Ontario sometimes that does happen, because of our close proximity to the US border, for clarification.

Dr Regan: Yes, it does unfortunately.

Mr Neumann: I related to what you said about the parents being involved. I hate to mention this, but 20 years ago my wife and I were involved in a half-day, co-op day nursery, and the parents ran this thing with one paid staff person. Part of the payment that you made was volunteering to work in the centre a couple of half-days a week. It was an interesting experience, and I gather that trend is increasing.

Dr Regan: Yes, it is. I think you get that where you have parents who are able to do that. The one thing that gets in the way of that is when both parents have to work. We have some in Ontario where the parents go in, and many of them I think do a good little job of trying to keep it going and to keep the parents interested. But people I have talked to say we lose our parents when they have to go to work, when both parents have to work.

Mr Neumann: Earlier on, we were discussing the early identification of children with special problems. I agree with you that there are kids who do not grow out of it and who are going to

require special education for many years. Do you have any thoughts on the linkages that should take place between the day care system and the entrance to the school system?

Dr Regan: The best I have is really an experience of one of my students who has worked with a group of two- and three-year-olds in an integrated day care setting. They have children who have no special problems, they have children with physical problems and they have children with some learning problems.

She said what they are really trying to do there is to build the kind of friendships and peer networks among the children so that they go to each other's birthday parties and they do this sort of thing. She tells me, as do other people who work in there, when these children go to kindergarten, whereas they might be able to spend some time in that program, they really do need some special kinds of educational help that are probably not able to be provided in kindergarten.

Mr Neumann: Is the information getting from the knowledgeable day care provider who may spot a child who may not need special needs at this point? Maybe they are getting along fine in the day care centre but—

Dr Regan: But there is somebody spotting it.

Mr Neumann: Spotting it and saying. Is that getting to the school system?

Dr Regan: No, I do not think it is. I think the possibility of that happening is increasing as the day cares are located in the schools. Where you have school boards, and some of them are, making a real effort to have that primary consultant or elementary consultant do a couple of things—have professional development for everybody who is working with the children. It is offered to the day care staff as well as to the school staff and they get together and they talk about it.

In fact, there are some places in Simcoe county where they do that, even when the day care centre is a way the heck off somewhere else. They get the teachers together from the day care and the kindergarten and they talk about these children: "You better watch this. I'm not sure about that." But I think it is a chancy thing at best. I do not think there is really a good systematic plan for doing that.

Mr Neumann: What can be done to improve the communication and the transfer of information to help the kindergarten teacher and the new school prepare to help the kids with special needs?

Dr Regan: I think part of that is this whole policy that we begin to think about this as an experience that children have and we talk about. It is not unusual for the kindergarten and the day care people to get together. It is the thing we need to do. I think individual principals and individual consultants in some places have done an excellent job of that.

One of the things that I find from time to time is that the schools are a little uncertain. It sort of comes out in this report about whether schools are in this business. Is their mandate really being broadened so that they get into this? Some superintendents and some principals really see and pick this up and go with it. You have that happening. But I think right now it is almost an individual board kind of thing.

Mr Neumann: You mentioned some of your students following four-year-olds through the day and you gave a couple of examples of what could happen. I suppose the variety is even greater than what you described because you have home day care. You have grandmother looking after the kids.

Dr Regan: That's right. We have everybody. Some poor kids—

Mr Neumann: You have latchkey kids who are on their own for part of the day.

1630

Dr Regan: The latchkey kids are the ones I think the in-school child care is getting at, and I am very pleased about that. A child could be with the babysitter, then the day care, then the junior kindergarten.

Mr Neumann: With two or three transportation experiences through the day.

Dr Regan: Right, and if you can imagine, with these snowmobile outfits, moving these children from day care, even a block, the kids are exhausted by the time the day is over, just taking those things on and off and doing this sort of thing. The expectations of people are different. These are little guys; they have to keep changing around. I would also say there are some people who I think are doing a magnificent job.

Mr J. M. Johnson: Just briefly, to follow the same line of questioning on identification tags for a child, maybe teachers or workers in a day care see something that they could flag for the future education problems, whatever the problem would be. If they diagnose it incorrectly it would make no difference, but if they did come up with something that a teacher could be aware of, maybe they could correct it before it becomes too much of a problem.

Dr Regan: I think there are two things operating here. One is to remember that in many day care situations you have only one trained staff person, so you have really got to have the staff that is going to be able to spot that. That is number one. If they do, I think if you had a meeting—and I do not think it takes any big thing—for example a couple times a year or at least when the children move, as they do in many primary schools, the kindergarten teacher meets with the grade 1 teacher and so on.

If you had that, and also if the day care teacher has some resource to go to if she spots this—suppose she suspects the child has even a minor hearing loss. Where can she go to kind of check this out? I think these needs are very important. My own feeling is that sometimes this does not make you too popular in the child care community, but I really believe the more of these centres that eventually are in schools, that school services will be available to people.

Mr J. M. Johnson: This is based on the premise that the child starts in day care and goes into a system that is close to that.

Dr Regan: That is right.

Mr J. M. Johnson: But there are many cases where they will move or for some reason they are in a totally different environment.

Dr Regan: That is right, and there is no systematic follow-through.

Mr J. M. Johnson: There is a complete break between one and the other. Why would that have to be lost? Why could there not be some type of a system where there is something recorded about that child?

Dr Regan: I think you could have it if you were able to get the day cares into some kind of a system, but you might get a child who goes from public day care into one of the commercial day care operations into someplace else. One of the things is getting co-ordination of those care centres. Such a system just is not in place now.

Mr J. M. Johnson: Since we are getting into something new, why could we not start developing this as well? The two could work together.

Dr Regan: I think you could do it as long as you had your centres and you set it up some way with their supervision out of Comsoc; you would probably be able to do that. At the same time, I think you could almost have a parallel system. People around Metro are lucky; they spot something and there are services at the Hospital for Sick Children where you can go down and you can have a child assessed or you can bring him to the clinic at OISE or something like that. It

would help if there were some way that people knew, and even in the centres it was made available to them, that these are community resources.

Mr J. M. Johnson: Even at the present time, if a report was to go to the parents about the day care child at least the parents would have the option to take it to the new teacher.

Dr Regan: That again is sometimes a matter of trained staff. It is not the lack of desire or wanting to do on the part of the people, but you realize that some big centres have got one person who is really trained. The other people are not.

Mr Neumann: We talked about the linkages and the communication between day care and the school system. What about the linkages to other community agencies, the children's aid society, where there are women's shelters? Sometimes parks and recreation have preschool programs.

Dr Regan: This is something that the early primary education document talked a lot about. There are some good recommendations in there for linking the school and other agencies.

Mr Neumann: Public health units.

Dr Regan: That is right.

Certain immigrant services have day care where they have the classes for women who are learning English. Parks and recreation departments have things, but also this is linking with other agencies. This is why some of these family centres—and I point to this one at the Syme school in York because I think it is excellent. The people who put that centre together were from the school board and all the community agencies. They really have a nice referral system there to the health agencies and other social agencies.

I was not involved in putting it together. They had people who just wanted to do more of the same thing, "What we need here is more community service," and they said, "No, what we need is a different kind of setting for people." This family centre is really like a neighbourhood centre. They have a day care registry. They have a clothing exchange for people. They have the nurse who comes in. In fact, when I was in there one time they had a child whom the day care worker was just uneasy about. She said, "I'm having the nurse come in." Then I looked and we sort of all talked and suggested to the mother that she take the child to such-and-such. These things are possible if we can get everybody to think that way. That is why I keep going back to what I think is the need to rethink, reconceptualize these services.

Mr Neumann: Do you think in today's society we sometimes overregiment the child's schedule? We get children involved in so many activities.

Dr Regan: Yes.

Mr Neumann: Then they are enrolled in a lot of activities outside of the day care or the kindergarten and they do not get time just to play with the kids in the neighbourhood.

Dr Regan: I personally think that and I think they need this other—

Mr Neumann: Is that not an important part of their development?

Dr Regan: Absolutely, but I also know that for some children, there is nobody at home and I am worried about children being at home by themselves. I really am.

This is why I think in-school child care offers some great opportunities for that. What if a child who goes in there just wants to go off and sit by himself? Let him do it in his in-school child care. Does he want to play basketball? Does he want to play with other children? Does he want to take a nap? Does he want to get a peanut butter sandwich? Does he want to do what he would do at home?

Someone brought this up in Montreal and she said, "We're certainly learning that 11-year-olds aren't interested in circle time." They were trying to do things and they thought, "We've got to rethink this," to think of in-school child care as a different kind of thing, especially for four- and 12-year-olds. I think we could do some of that and not say, "You're in in-school child care and we're going to fill every single minute of it." I agree with you, I do not think we should.

The Chair: My 11-year-old will wonder how we finally got that message to the adults. Further comments?

Mr Callahan: I just want to pick up on something. I have been in and out, so I am not sure I am on the right train of thought, but I got the feeling that there was some importance in terms of being able to have a continuity of observations that are made by various people, particularly if kids move around from area A to area B and it may be a long distance.

There is some suggestion, although it is being resisted, in terms of us all having our health history on computer with a coded type of access to that. What would you, as a person involved in the education field, feel about that type of program being established to make certain that the observation that X makes is not lost to Y

because it did not get written down or did not get passed on?

1640

Dr Regan: I would have no problem with that, as long as everybody was working with the same criteria. There are two things along that line that I think would be important. One would be to have some idea—let's say the child comes into me in senior kindergarten—of what the program and experiences were in the kindergarten and what they were in the day care.

Then, if we could agree upon some criteria for talking about the child, I think we would have to have information on health problems, such as, was it found that he had a minor hearing loss? Is this a child who has had rheumatic fever? Is it this or that? I am a little bit leery of just sending along a lot of comments about the child until I know the criterion that is being used.

Mr Callahan: I guess my reason for asking that is—and it must be five years ago, because I have been elected only five years—I had a constituent tell me about a child that was assessed by a psychologist, and when the mother went to the school for parents' night, the teacher told her the child had problems. She asked, "Have you not taken the steps that were outlined in the psychologist's report?" The teacher said, "What report?" The report was locked away in a safe in the nurse's office, not to ever be seen by anybody, apparently.

Dr Regan: I do not think that can happen any more.

Mr Callahan: I hope not.

Dr Regan: You obviously have to be careful about what you pass on and circulate as information from one place to the next. But if we could agree upon the kinds of information about children that would be necessary in terms of health problems—for example, if the child is a diabetic—or important in terms of the educational program, we should have some way of passing that along. But I do not think you should ever pass it along without the parents understanding that.

One of the problems with just casual anecdotal records is this. One time I had a student in my class who was a school principal and he did not understand the anecdotal record he got on his own child. He said: "They say his patterns are improving. What does that mean?" People write down things that have some meaning for them, but it does not have any meaning as it goes along. I am very wary of that.

Ms Poole: I want to thank you, Professor Regan, for your comments, particularly in this area. It is incredibly important that any criteria be objective. One of the biggest problems I see sometimes for children in the school setting is, if early on they get a certain reputation, it is usually the norm that the teacher from the previous year will meet with the new teacher to discuss behaviour patterns of the various individuals in the class. Quite often, that child, because he has had a personality conflict, might be targeted in a certain way. That is why I think your comments are very timely in this regard. We must make sure that they are objective criteria and that we are not putting children at a disadvantage.

Dr Regan: I think we have to do that. With parents, too, many times the problem is when parents are not told until it is sort of too late. There was a famous, or infamous, case around here not too many years ago in a board. When the children got ready to go in grade 4, their parents were told that a lot of them could not read, and

they had never been told that before. It is this kind of thing that creates a lot of our problems.

The Chair: Thank you very much, professor, for being with us today. I am sure there are a number of committee members, by their questions, obviously, who felt the importance of your presentation.

I think I have covered basically all of the committee business unless there are further questions.

Mrs O'Neill: I came across a report that came across my desk today, from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, that says it expects the Ministry of Education to publish a position paper on the role of school boards in child care in winter 1990. Do we know anything about that and, if we do, will we be getting that?

The Chair: We can look into that and find out for Monday.

The minister looks attentive, even after this long period of time. I appreciate that.

The committee adjourned, at 1648.

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 22 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 22 January 1990

The committee met at 1416 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order. I would like to welcome Carolyn Warberg, chairperson of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Co-ordinators of ECE. Welcome before this committee this afternoon. I guess the easiest thing is just to turn it over to you and you can get started. How is that?

ONTARIO COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY CO-ORDINATORS OF ECE

Ms Warberg: Thank you. I welcome this opportunity to come before you and talk about the care and education of young children and the potential role that the colleges of applied arts and technology could play.

When I read your mandate, I realized it was so broad that I could sit here for a few days and continue to talk and talk, but I thought perhaps it was most appropriate, as a representative of the colleges of applied arts and technology, to focus primarily on teacher training.

By way of introduction, and perhaps it is something that is not new to the members of this committee, as you know, early childhood is currently receiving a great deal of attention, not just in Ontario but across Canada, and it is not surprising, given the developments of the past 10 or 20 years. As a result of major and significant change in family structures and employment patterns, early childhood has attained a new level of social and political importance in Canada.

One of the major sources of change is related to the dramatic increase in working mothers. Women now account for over 41 per cent of the total Canadian labour force, and this trend reflects both the economic necessity of two salaries to raise a family as well as changes in the roles of women which have occurred over the past 20 years. Economic forecasts indicate that the percentage of women employed outside of their homes will continue to grow. The dramatic increase in the number of working women has resulted in a re-evaluation of programs provided for young children.

A second major change is the growing recognition that the early years are a critically important time for learning. The quality of a child's experiences before the age of five can influence all learning later in life and this has been repeatedly substantiated in research, such as that by Weikart and Schweinhart and so on.

One of the most critical components in these experiences is the adult or the teacher who is responsible for the quality of programs provided for young children. Individuals responsible for the care of young children are the key element to high-quality early childhood programs.

When I use the word "care" here, I mean care in the holistic sense. I am not going to talk about care and education. When I say "care" I mean the care that addresses all of the domains of development: cognitive, physical, motor and so on.

Some would comment that in fact the teacher is the single most important factor in a child's school experience. As a representative from all of the early childhood education programs in the colleges of applied arts and technology, I will address and focus my comments specifically to the training of teachers of young children.

In terms of training in Ontario, there are at present two major stakeholders that train or educate individuals to work with young children: first, the faculties of education; and second, the colleges of applied arts and technology, not necessarily in that order. One can at present obtain a faculty of education course and obtain a primary specialist certificate. Those individuals are qualified to teach children in the early primary years.

There are already extensive reports—I am sure you have read many of them—that deal with teacher-training in Ontario, such as the Teacher Education Review Steering Committee's report and the early primary education project report of 1985 from the Ministry of Education, and so on.

As a teacher myself with a primary specialist certificate and someone who taught for three years in primary grades and for three years was a consultant with a large school board in Ontario. I bring some of that background to bear on some of my comments today.

The second major option that exists in Ontario at present is the colleges of applied arts and

technology early childhood education programs, the ECE diploma.

The first community college was—is—Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology, which opened in 1967, so we have been in the business for over 20 years. The early childhood programs opened under a different name in those days and have grown and evolved but are now offered through all 22 Ontario colleges, soon to be 23.

While the community colleges were originally mandated as vocational institutions, the college system has evolved to reflect the changing needs of Ontario's labour force. As a result, programs that were developed and implemented in 1967 have also grown up and in some instances curricula have changed significantly. The early childhood program is an example of just such a program. As I have said, there are 22, soon to be 23, programs in Ontario at present.

There have been a number of changes over the last 20 years that I already mentioned: the growing number of women in the workforce, the changing family structures and so on. As a result, child care in Ontario has assumed a new importance in the lives of families and young children. Once considered a welfare service, child care is now regarded by many as a social necessity. Once regarded as custodial care, child care programs are now designed to address the full spectrum of developmental needs of young children. Thus, the programs that train early childhood educators have gained a new status and have evolved to keep pace with changes in the field in which the issues of quality care and professionalization have served as a framework for curriculum development.

If you could, please, I would like you now to refer to the model route that has been provided in the package before you. I believe it is incumbent upon me to tell you a little bit about these programs, because they seem to be poorly understood.

An early childhood diploma in Ontario consists of two years of training, a four-semester program. This model route is an example of one model route. It is from Centennial College. There are, in total, 33 courses that an applicant must successfully complete with a minimum C grade in each course in order to obtain his or her ECE diploma.

Most of the community colleges also have laboratory schools, and those lab schools for the most part have been specifically designed to be training facilities for those who are going to be developing the skills to work with young

children. For the most part, they are located on campus, in the college, and they work closely with the faculty of the community college that they serve.

The advantage to these lab schools is I guess quite obvious, but one aspect is of course that the lab school staff are able to work closely with the early childhood faculty and therefore the programs reflect current research, current information and knowledge about the state of the art. They serve as training facilities for students where students may observe young children, and many students can complete their supervised field placements in this facility as well, so there is a very close liaison between the lab school facility that is on campus and the program and the two attempt to work hand in hand to make sure that one is modelling what the other is saying and so on and so forth.

As I mentioned earlier, the curriculum of the early childhood programs has evolved significantly over the last 20 years. If you look at the list of courses before you, you will see a lot of names. They really do not mean all that much, but let me just give you some examples of what we are talking about.

For example, child development is probably one of the core courses in an early childhood program. It usually runs between 60 to 100 hours of study in total in the two years of the program. Students study development from birth to about age 10 but with a special emphasis, of course, on preschool children and their needs.

There are also courses in almost every semester that deal with the design of curriculum for young children that may be considered developmentally appropriate. These courses work hand in hand with child development courses to look at what the needs of young children are, how you identify those needs, what kinds of activities provide for those developmental needs and what kinds of physical environments need to be planned to also provide for those developmental needs.

You will also see courses listed that include the word "family." Those courses look at the changing needs of families, family structures, the challenges that families face, how to work closely with parents, how to support them and so on—all the issues related to working with families.

There are also courses that deal with health, safety and nutrition, some of the basic issues, even social policy, advocacy and the early childhood educator as a follow-up to introduction to political economy, which looks at the political

structure, how it works, what role child care plays in that, how it works in relation to the party system and so on and so on.

As well, there is a very heavy practicum component. At the least in a community college, the practicum component would comprise 500 hours of supervised placement. At the most, it would be approximately double that, about 1,000 supervised hours. In this particular model route there is a practicum every semester, so in every semester the student is placed in a setting where he is supervised and evaluated.

This is the book I think you would each want a copy of. It is a book of competencies and it is used to evaluate those experiences, and those experiences have been very closely defined to ensure that students are in fact developing skills in a sequential manner that will prepare them for their work with young children, primarily preschool children, two and a half to five years of age. In total, there are four placements in this model route, and therefore four subdivisions to this particular field manual, so there is a systematic evaluation system as well. It is not just anecdotal reporting but a checklist of competencies and skills. All those competencies and skills have been related back to the curriculum itself in this case.

Over more than 20 years, early childhood programs in Ontario have grown up. They have changed and evolved from what some might think would be a basic care, perhaps custodial care, model of care for young children to being a far more comprehensive training package, training system, that provides the skills and knowledge for individuals to work and to meet the developmental needs of young children and of their families as those needs change as well.

While those programs have changed in Ontario, there has been little recognition of the change and little recognition of the skills an early childhood educator brings to bear. There are very few universities, as an example, that will grant advanced standing to somebody with an ECE diploma. I would like to talk about a couple of examples.

A couple of years ago, I heard that a very large school board was going to be opening junior kindergartens. This was a new initiative for the school board, and it is a substantial school board, and I knew this would result in hundreds of jobs. As somebody who had worked for that school board, I was interested in what they might see as being somebody who was well trained, let's say, for these positions in junior kindergartens, so I called.

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I identified myself as somebody with an Ontario teachers' certificate and I asked what kinds of individuals they were looking for to work in these junior kindergartens and they said somebody with their OTC, preferably a primary specialist. I said, "If I have an ECE diploma as well as my OTC, am I going to be more qualified to work in your junior kindergarten?" "No." "If I have an ECE diploma on top of my four-year degree and my OTC, am I going to make more money with your school board?" "No." "Do you mean to tell me if I have 33 courses completed through a community college, a two-year ECE diploma program, plus my four-year degree, plus my OTC, I am not going to make any more money, even though these are specially designed to train people to work with young children?" The answer was "No."

Then I asked: "What do I have to do to make more money with your school board? What would you consider to be more qualified?" They said, "Five university courses." I said, "What would the nature of those courses be?" "It doesn't matter." "So I could take five physical anthropology courses and I would get more money?" "That's right." "And you're not going to give me more money?"—I was really testing here to see what is going to get me more money, what do we define as being qualified to work with young children and what is going to get me that kind of credential I am looking for? I got the answer. The answer was, "Not your ECE diploma but a degree in something, your OTC, plus five something university courses, that will make you more money, Miss."

That is one example. Another example that is one I struggle with on almost a daily basis, and it is perhaps a little bit closer to my situation as a chairperson now in the child studies area in a college, is that of working with students who wish to pursue further education once they have completed their ECE diploma.

They write a letter of application to a university, and most of the time they get a form letter back that says, "We are sorry, but we will not give you any credit for courses completed at a college of applied arts and technology from Ontario."

This student in particular had her grade 13, she had all of her OACs, she was an award-winning student, she had a 4.0 grade point average—straight As—and yet she was told in these letters from universities, which she showed me, form letters from a registrar's office, that she would not be given any credit at all—to a degree which

focused on child studies, not engineering; child studies degrees—no credit.

So the student and I took the syllabus, looked at the curriculum for the child studies degree in question and examined where there might be some overlap between the early childhood diploma program that she had just finished, all 33 courses, and the course of study that she was interested in pursuing to get some additional knowledge, some additional information about young children and their growth and development. We were able to identify approximately 9 courses that were exactly, word for word, what one might read from a calendar that described ECE diploma courses.

We then wrote to the university. I wrote to the university on behalf of the student and said, "This student has completed these courses." We included all the course outlines, which gave detailed learning objectives and also provided the required text and methods of evaluation, and asked if perhaps these could be assessed with a slightly different eye and some additional information. We got the same letter back saying, "No, we do not provide for any advanced standing for courses at the diploma level from a college of applied arts and technology in Ontario."

Needless to say, this is a discouraging experience for students who then find themselves in the position, if they are really motivated, of going anyway and attending the university in question, and in a sense double billing the Ontario taxpayer, I might suggest, because they then study courses with the same textbook—they can use their same textbook, in fact—and complete many of the same assignments. They say to me: "I've just used my assignment that I used for your course in social policy, advocacy and the early childhood educator. I didn't have to do it again." They repeat their education towards a university degree. This has been a frustrating experience, and again, it takes a highly motivated student to go forth to those other universities.

However, there are some universities that do recognize the ECE diploma in Ontario. One such post-secondary institution is Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Ryerson has a direct entry third-year program. They give full recognition to the two years of the diploma program completed at a college of applied arts and technology and students enter into the third year. Of course, they must meet some admissions criteria. These students generally have to have a B-plus average. There are some fairly stringent selection criteria for these students, an interview, etc.

However, in talking to the director of the school of early childhood at Ryerson, only one student in 11 years has not successfully completed his or her bachelor's degree after entering the third year of the direct entry program—only one. I think that says something about the courses that are provided through the colleges of applied arts and the potential that they have for forming a foundation in further education for these students.

I am going to get to my recommendation, but where I am going with this, the direction is that I think we should develop an articulation committee that meets to examine the curriculum of diploma programs and related child study degree programs so that we can identify the similarities in the course of study. This would mean the development of a fairly sophisticated mechanism, perhaps a listing of learning objectives and some sort of overlay or some group system which looked at where these learning objectives happen in other courses.

This is not a new idea. Last May I attended a federal conference in Winnipeg, the Canadian Child Day Care Federation conference, where I spoke and met with some individuals from British Columbia who have such an articulation committee. It is made up of the representatives of their colleges and their universities and they get together on a yearly basis and look at, "What's happening? What have you changed at your college, what have you changed at your university this year? Do we need to look at some different advanced standings, some different credit being granted for diplomas?"

This is a two-way street, by the way. I am not suggesting that this is a one-way ticket for people with college of applied arts and technology diplomas to go into universities, but similarly for people with university degrees to get recognition in the colleges as well.

This kind of a committee would be, I think, a fairly easy mechanism to establish. I will talk a little bit more about that in a second.

A second issue, and a question that I think we need to ask ourselves that is perhaps a little bit more relevant, in a sense, a little bit more finely tuned to the deliberations of this committee, is: Do either the faculties of education or the colleges of applied arts and technology adequately prepare individuals right now to work with four- and five-year olds in school settings? Some would argue yes; others would say no.

I think there is a way to find the answer. I would suggest that what we need to look at are competencies.

In the best of all worlds, I would forget about what is presently available. I would put diploma programs just away for a second, I would put faculty programs away for a second, and I would sit down with a group of individuals who have primary care and responsibility for young children and say, "What is it that you need to be able to do to be a professional who fulfills the developmental needs and requirements of four- and five-year olds in a school setting," and I would list those competencies.

There is one such project actually currently under way. A colleague and I wrote a proposal to the child care initiatives fund for federal funding and received approval to define the competencies for those who work with young children.

This is a slightly more grand-scale project, because we are looking at those who work with infants and toddlers, preschool children, school-age children and children with special needs. It is a massive project and will take in total 18 months to complete, but it has all major stakeholders involved in this project. This will result in the identification of the skills that somebody needs to work in this field with young children.

Once you have those competencies identified, you can then proceed to zero-base curriculum design. You can look at the competencies and say, "If these are the skills, if this is the knowledge that someone requires to work in this capacity, then here are the courses that will prepare somebody to develop those skills and to develop that knowledge."

Having done that second step, I would suggest that then you would look at the colleges and look at the faculties and identify all the resources and all the skills and expertise, both human and physical, that we currently have available to us, the lab schools, people with expertise in early childhood education, any resources that one might have, and then determine how those resources fit into this program that trains people specifically to work with four- and five-year olds. That would give an answer as to whether or not one or the other—or perhaps both, I would like to suggest—might be involved in the training of people who work with four- and five-year old children.

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It sounds like a daunting proposition. It is not.

I talked earlier about a conference I attended in Winnipeg in May where I was asked to talk about training and I led a workshop that was actively engaging—I do not know, I cannot think of words to describe it. I guess for myself the test was that it was so engaging that, as the person who led the

workshop, I did not know that we were being filmed by a television crew and we later made the news. My mother said, "I saw you on the news." I said, "Oh, that's nice, what was I doing?"

Anyway, my task with that group was to identify all what we might consider core curriculum for people who want to work with young children. This group comprised representation from across Canada from both colleges and universities. There were in total about 40 individuals, and in 40 minutes we had accomplished the task. In 40 minutes, approximately 40 individuals said, "These are the building blocks; this is the core curriculum for training somebody to work with young children." It was complete consensus that these were the building blocks.

So while it sounds like a daunting task to try to identify what these training objectives or blocks might be, it is not. It is a great deal simpler than one might argue. In conversation with other faculty from other universities where I sit on various committees, there is a great deal of agreement already as to what that core might look like in Ontario as well.

A third area would require the development or recognition of additional qualifications. Once this model was developed, in-service programs would need to be developed to fill in the gaps, whatever those gaps were, as they were identified for those who already have an early childhood diploma, if that were the case, or primary specialist certificate. You could use this competency-based developed curriculum then to develop systems for granting credit to either qualification and identifying the need for additional specialized training. Again, the resources from colleges or from faculties of education could be used to provide these skills.

I would like you to refer to a second document now in your package, a survey of early primary teachers. It says survey 7 on the front, but I would like you to flip over to the questionnaire.

Two years ago, I worked on a major report for my college which looked at early childhood and all of the changes that were taking place, because at that point there were some major provincial and federal initiatives and local initiatives, and I think the college was fulfilling its college mandate, which was to be responsive to community needs. They wanted me to review all of this literature and talk to some of the key stakeholders and survey those people as well to look at what are the things we are going to need to do to best prepare people for this job as it evolves and changes, and things were happening very quickly at that point.

One of the areas I looked at because of my own personal interest was the area of early primary teachers. Approximately 600 surveys were sent out to a group of early primary teachers in a very large school board and I received about a 25 per cent response to this survey. I asked them whether or not there was a role for colleges of applied arts and technology in providing early childhood courses for teachers of early primary children. From the analysis on the front page, you will see that 80 per cent of those teachers said yes, which I think is a fairly strong positive response to a potential role for colleges of applied arts and technology.

However, I had also done my homework and realized that many of those teachers would not receive additional money should they proceed and complete an ECE diploma program especially designed for them, so the last question I asked was, "If you didn't get any money for this, if it wasn't an additional qualification and it wasn't recognized by the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario, would you still be interested," and 25 per cent of the group still said yes, which I think is significant, given that they would not be making additional money, perhaps. Teachers are used to taking additional qualifications and packages and then seeing those recognized somehow in their salaries or their pay bands. I took this to be a fairly significant response and a positive response as well.

Our recommendations, which you also have in your package, come out of those three areas that I have just discussed. They are these:

First, I think that we should develop teacher education programs that specifically prepare individuals to work with four- and five-year-old children and that this program development should begin with an orientation to zero-based curriculum design. In order to accomplish this task, a working committee comprising individuals who have primary responsibility for the care of young children should identify the competencies required of this role. A curriculum can then be designed to train individuals to work with four- and five-year-olds based on these competencies. This would accomplish the objective of putting aside what we have now, rather than looking at the models we have now and just slightly altering, shifting or changing, which I do not think is an ethical response to the problem at hand.

Second, we should identify and utilize the physical and human resources that are presently available for teacher education in both the faculties of education and the colleges of applied

arts and technology. For example, all colleges operate lab schools. These could be an excellent resource in the training of individuals to work with young children. If there were a combination of a program which drew on the resources of the faculties and the colleges, individuals from both settings could use these lab schools, which are already presently available and have observation booths, sound systems, excellent supervision and so on.

The third recommendation is to develop an in-service program or programs based on this competency-based model of teacher education. Individuals who currently hold the primary specialist certificate or early childhood education diploma may require additional skills. Colleges and universities should work together to design additional qualifications that fill in any identified gaps in training.

The fourth recommendation is to develop an articulation committee comprising representation from early childhood education programs and universities. This group would be charged with the responsibility of developing a mechanism that would enable the systematic examination of curriculum and would result in the identification of similarities in programs. The committee could and would meet on a regular basis to consult and provide updated information.

The fifth recommendation is to develop linkages between colleges and universities that are flexible and that enable individuals to move between programs by obtaining credit for previous studies.

The sixth is to share human resources and thus draw upon the expertise in both universities and colleges. Faculty exchanges would enable the strengthening of linkages between programs and the retention of staff through such opportunities for professional development.

There is a seventh recommendation, and I think it is a motherhood statement but I am going to say it anyway: that is, to hold the care of young children as a very vital and very central issue because of the importance these years play in the later development of young children.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Members of the committee have indicated they would like to ask you some questions. I thank you for your submission.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation. I am reading between the lines of what you are saying. It does not particularly paint a happy picture of where we are at the moment in terms of thoughtfulness about our preparation for

childhood education in general, but I think that is important to say to us, and also to come up with some approaches to it.

I would like a copy for the committee of the document you were raising, and to go along with what you have given us in terms of the Centennial College program, I wonder if it is possible to give us a calendar or something which would lay out a little more thoroughly what these programs entail and what is expected.

For instance, I noticed there were four courses on early childhood education curriculum development there, and it would be very interesting to see how that is developed and what the premises are for it. That would very helpful documentation if you could get it for us, just one copy, I think, and the committee can then get one for each caucus or whatever is seen to be appropriate by our steering committee at that point.

I wondered if you could give me some idea of what is happening at the faculties in comparison with what you have just described for the Centennial College program here. For a new teacher who might end up going into the primary section and dealing with kindergarten or whatever, what is the number of hours of program that would be directly related to that age group that potential teacher would receive at a faculty of education in comparison with the number of hours you have referred to here?

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Ms Warberg: About two years ago, a colleague and I sat down and took our copies of the various programs from different faculties of education in Ontario and did a comparison, which I did not bring with me, of a number of practicum hours, the number of hours of child development, and we looked at what we considered to be core curriculum to try to identify how we were linked and how we matched up, one against the other. Plus, I am a trained primary specialist.

The number of hours was significantly less. I cannot remember exactly how many it was, to be honest with you, but it was significantly less in terms of the practicum experience itself.

In terms of child development, from time to time, when we looked at the course calendars, child development was noticeably absent. It might have been called something else. We tried to find that out and had some difficulties doing that. In some areas it was included.

In other areas, such as designing curriculum for young children, again we had a difficult time finding out where those courses were. There seemed to be a theme of curriculum develop-

ment, but certainly nowhere near the number of hours we spent, as an example, in this model route, which would be a total of 200 hours at least studying activities that are developmentally appropriate and various theories, such as Piaget, and looking at Erik Erikson as well, Montessori, Froebel, giving historical context to it and so on. That is approximately 200 hours in this diploma program. I could speak of my personal experience that it was considerably less when I was trained to be an early primary teacher.

Other components were missing altogether. Working with families, families and socialization were not emphasized and were only sporadically available to teachers who were in training. Those are some of the major differences that we found.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested in seeing that study. How dated is it?

Ms Warberg: Two years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested in also seeing a copy of that, if you do not mind my making extra work for you. It is my tendency in the committee to do this, normally to ministry staff and not to witnesses, however.

Ms Warberg: Okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am wondering, what is your interaction now with the faculties of ed? You gave us the examples of some of your advocacy work for students and stuff, but is there much of the kind of interaction that you are advocating here? I am presuming there is not or you would not be suggesting that these things are necessary.

Ms Warberg: Because of my professional role in the province and in Canada, I have a lot of interaction with individuals who teach on faculties of education and in degree programs that focus on child studies and sit on some committees as well in Ontario at those other post-secondary institutions. We have an ongoing dialogue about our frustrations that there are not these linkages, because when we share information, we are able to say, "We're doing that and we're doing that," and there is very much a duplication of effort going on.

Where there could be shared expertise, shared information and shared resources, instead there is a lack of recognition and a great deal of frustration, as you have probably heard, from students who have completed programs and people who work in colleges of applied arts and technology. We would like to see something else happening and we do various things in our own professional capacities to try to ensure there will

be some movement, but it has been difficult to open the door. It has actually been difficult to draw a door in the wall.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is good to see that you are doing this study under the federal initiatives money. That is great, but does this mean that Ontario is not doing exactly the kind of evaluation that you are doing, that the Ministry of Education is not doing exactly that kind of evaluation? I do not understand why that is not being done by government at this stage. Is it being done, that you know of?

Ms Warberg: As I said, two years ago I did a study for my own college about all of the major initiatives, federal, provincial and local initiatives, in early childhood education and realized that the field was changing significantly. As the chairperson of the OCAAT ECE co-ordinator's group, there had been a lot of discussion among my colleagues about those changes and some frustration and some bewilderment as to how to address them.

As an example, there is certainly a more significant need for infant and toddler care, there is certainly a much greater need now for school-age care of children, and we had to really start looking again at, what is it we are doing in our two-year diploma programs? Are we training people so that they can step out into an infant and toddler setting and provide the kinds of experiences that they need to provide for those children?

The answer was no, we do not think so, because when the ECE programs were developed, the focus, the primary emphasis, was on the preschool child, children two and a half to five years of age. While we look at the whole spectrum of development, both in terms of child development courses and in terms of designing curriculum courses, we were somewhat frustrated by the lack of time in two years to also train people to work with infants and toddlers and school-age, so we have gone back to the books. We have gone back to looking at what are competencies so that we can design curriculum.

What is probably going to happen is that we will have a two-year core program that will develop generic skills primarily aimed at preschool children, but after that a third year, which will be a post-diploma year, for students who want to study infant and toddler specialties, school-age specialties and children with special needs. So that is what we have done.

We were concerned that those initiatives were not happening on a more central basis, let's say, in Ontario, so we decided to just go ahead and do

it ourselves and to show some initiative. A colleague and I, as I said, wrote this proposal for child care initiatives funding so that we could support the kind of research that we thought needed to be done to identify those competencies.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is very commendable. I think the difficulty is that here we have all these provincial initiatives in JK, SK, etc., and at a time when you would expect that kind of thing to be being organized provincially, I really do not understand it, but maybe you can explain that to me.

You talk about having to define competency before you can move from there, and I think allied to that is also having some idea of what we expect of kids during that stage. I am not even sure there is unanimity there at the moment in terms of what we are expecting of four- and five-year-olds.

But already, even before the government moves into its mandatory JK, a huge percentage of the boards in the province, 80 per cent of them or something—actually 83 per cent; was that the latest figure we heard?—are actually providing JK. So for a number of years now it has been provided out there.

I just want to be clear if I understand what you are saying. As far as you are concerned, that definition of competency for that program, which is already in existence, has not been done so that we can do some sort of base development of curriculum, or whatever terms?

Ms Warberg: That is right. I have looked at the program objectives for the primary specialty certificate, because I have pursued this a great deal, and again, about two or three years ago I met with somebody from the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario who was able to share that information with me so that I could get kind of an overview and try to understand why we kept bumping our heads up against a wall. I thought perhaps we were missing something.

I saw the program objectives for the primary specialist certificate, which again, I have already completed, and they were quite vaguely defined. Apparently there was no listing of competencies associated with those program objectives. Those are two different things, but one would expect that you would have to look at what someone needs to be able to do before you design the curriculum. I do not think that has been the case.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will come back to that with the ministry and with the faculties when we have them before us in the next little while.

I have one final short question; I know other members will want to get on. When you talk about these new mechanisms for linkages and that sort of thing, as we move to try, I hope, to do something coherent or rational—you have not mentioned working with the teachers' federations or the unions which represent the ECE grads. I wondered why. It seems to me they are major players. When you are talking about the economic realities for those various people and their representatives, who want to protect those workers on either side in terms of the major move which is likely to happen at some point or other as we start to define the competencies required, etc., why did you not make any mention of those major players?

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Ms Warberg: I think it is perhaps because of my orientation. That is, I think we can only deal with one step at a time. What I am most concerned about is developing quality programs that will prepare people to work with those age groups. The issue that you have raised is certainly one that is going to have to be addressed, but it is not one that I have had the time yet to include in looking at this whole area.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think the workers who are out there at the moment in the field need to be involved, not just those who are coming along afterwards.

Ms Warberg: Yes, absolutely. In terms of this competency project, they are involved. As I said, this is a massive project with an enormous amount of input from across the province, so there is a lot of opportunity for input there, but that is as far as I can say I will take it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You have done a lot already.

Mr Keyes: I just want to follow up, because Richard has actually touched on the point I wanted to make.

First of all, I appreciate very much what you have presented today. What you really do is just show us perhaps some of the difficulties of trying to educate teachers today. We had talked at one time in this committee of looking at the whole field of teacher education, which I think is still a very vital one. We are looking at it today here in this very beginning end of it.

When you talked about calling the board to determine what would give you additional compensation, I am sure that in the back of your mind you knew very well that any courses providing additional compensation is more a factor of the federations than it is of boards of

education, because the federations—and I was part of it, doing it for many years—have always sought to get additional compensation for additional qualifications, but it has basically always been on the side of, shall we say, adding on the university courses, not down below at the community college level.

That is why my question is going to be related again to the fact you have not made any reference to the very large body of people who are really the only ones who are going to make this work; namely, the federations. I would hope that that is an area with which you might start.

We try to take a teacher today who is in university, has chosen to go to university, perhaps, first, rather than into work at the community college—and that is again more of the work that we need to do in schools, in our guidance departments, to show the young people there who have an interest in education that perhaps going to community college and ECE is one of the prime functions they should do. But without the co-operation and support of those who are out in the field to do this, I do not see us getting too far. I would urge that that be a kind of a direction you take.

As I say, we try to get teachers now to become a teacher in the whole sphere of primary education and all of elementary education in that very all-too-short period of time. We have broken it down to the secondary people, and perhaps taking intermediate options and primary/junior, but I think it is time we looked, with the federations, to expand it much more, just as now more and more it becomes looking at continuing education as another area that needs a lot of attention.

I guess I would only make the comment on what I thought was a very obvious point of your presentation that there has not been consultation with all of the federations, which I think is the strategic area of attack.

Ms Warberg: Do not forget that the idea of an articulation committee is not something that has happened. This is a recommendation that it should happen.

Mr Keyes: Right.

Ms Warberg: I would also want to suggest that by, I would hope, not placing union concerns first—that might muddy the waters of what might be the development of a very responsive curriculum to train people to work with young children. I am talking about zero-based curriculum development. That means put the faculties, put the colleges, put everything, unions too, aside for a

second. Look at, what do four- and five-year-old children need?

I said I spoke as a former teacher. I also speak as a single parent and am entirely intimate with what young children need in their growth and development. In order to see programs designed that train those key people who are going to spend all of their day with my child, I do not want union concerns to be addressed in the first place. I want somebody to put all that aside, in blue sky or whatever you want to do, and say, "This is it, this is what's going to make the best care for our young children in Ontario," then address the other concerns.

Mr Keyes: I just agreed, except I think that in your articulation committee, if you do not face reality and involve those players at the beginning, you will not get anywhere if you try to, say, get the faculty to sit down with the college. It will not happen; it will go nowhere. So only amend your recommendations.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One person's blue sky is another person's grey.

Ms Warberg: That is right.

Mr Keyes: Just add that as a third ingredient and then I think we could get somewhere.

Ms Warberg: Then we can go do it, sure.

Mr Jackson: First of all, I have heard you speak before. It was an outstanding presentation; I appreciate that. I guess the reality of this presentation just hit home now that you are getting questions from politicians when all these challenges are now coming to the forefront, but certainly an articulation committee will work better if we, as politicians, do not refer to university-level courses and then "down below" to the level of community colleges. I personally find that offensive, and I know that there was a slip, but I just hope you appreciate that there are a lot of us who feel that we can be open-minded in order to allow a blue sky in, to look at these kinds of challenges.

Having got that off the table, I would like to pursue some of the points that you have challenged us to look more deeply in, but I need clarity first. I may have missed part of the point you are making with respect to gaining credit for your ECE community college work at Ryerson, but, simply put, are we basically saying that two years of community college is the equivalent of four years' university? The reason I have to ask it that way is this: To start in the third year and then complete your fourth year, what do you actually end up with and are you any closer to being able to enter a teachers college?

The point I want to get at is that then you still have that hurdle of teachers college. I think perhaps we may have got somewhat confused about how this is leading to a teaching certificate when in fact that is not exactly what you are suggesting, but I want to get a clearer sense of the impediments to bridging those gaps.

The Chair: Just for clarification, this whole issue was covered, and I think you have restated it well about the circuitous route that Dr Doxey talked about at Ryerson. You said that they were taking in community college, going through their program, getting their baccalaureate, going on to teachers college and primary/junior and then going back to the teaching system. I think that was covered and it is in Hansard, just to refresh your memory on some of that stuff.

Mr Jackson: I am familiar with what we have heard to date. I am just trying to put it in context. An articulation committee—really, there are not just the elements of bridging community college and university-based programs, there is somehow making sure that the sum total of that effort of a student's understanding can be applied for purposes of entry for a teaching certificate. So I very much see the articulation committee being involved in challenging the teaching curriculum at the teachers colleges, which are post-graduate efforts.

Ms Warberg: I was really making two separate recommendations. First of all, there needs to be some recognition for the diploma program—simple. At Ryerson it happens already and it is a very successful mechanism, because those students do go into third year and complete a third and fourth year. At the end of four years they have an ECE diploma from community college and a bachelor of applied arts degree. That is one mechanism that works, that has been successful in terms of recognition and based upon our requirements.

The second recommendation, though, is quite separate and would be down the road. It is built on the first one and it is saying that if there is value to these programs and if in fact the students can complete a bachelor of applied arts, then maybe what we need to do is look at all of the programs that are offered out there that have child studies components to them, whether they be diploma or a degree, and work out a mechanism, once we have identified competencies in curriculum, for talking to each other about what it is that we have to offer and where there are similarities, therefore getting credit perhaps towards a degree or towards a diploma for someone who has a degree or has a diploma.

Mr Jackson: If I can jump to another area, I have several questions I want to pursue. Richard raised most of them, but in your national experience, what province is leading-edge in terms of wrestling with the very questions that you have brought forward to us today, in your view?

Ms Warberg: British Columbia.

Mr Jackson: Briefly, what gives you hope with what they are pursuing in BC?

Ms Warberg: That the people, who actually talk to each other there, are so positive about it when they report back; that their annual meetings are successful; that they seem have overcome territorial imperatives and are able to define—they have a mechanism established, like an agreed learning objective system, for talking to each other about what it is they do. They speak a common language with common concerns.

Mr Jackson: Have they done the kind of empirical research that you have proposed for the feds? Are they doing anything like that?

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Ms Warberg: Not that I know. Other provinces have. Manitoba has a competency-based sort of assessment. It was developed for different purposes, though, and from what I can understand from what we are calling the ECE research group here in Ontario, what they are developing is light years beyond anything else that exists right now in Canada.

When people say they have competency-based education or they have identified competencies, unfortunately, more often than not those competencies are more vaguely defined than what we are looking at and do not form the basis for later curriculum development. What we are talking about is going back right to square zero to ask what people need to be able to do and looking at specialized areas, bringing in all the multicultural aspects and special needs and so on. It is quite different.

Mr Jackson: As well as the other factors: urban versus rural, the family violence component; all of those matters are being re-examined in Manitoba?

Ms Warberg: Absolutely. The true needs.

Mr Jackson: Is there a specific piece of work in Manitoba that is completed or under way which our researcher could be directed towards?

Ms Warberg: Their competencies would be one document. They list their competencies.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is this the government or the faculties of the universities?

Ms Warberg: This is the government, actually.

Mr Jackson: The Ministry of Education?

Ms Warberg: Manitoba Community Services.

Mr Jackson: Community Services is the operative in this one.

Ms Warberg: Yes. Plus they are developing more bridges, for example, between the University of Manitoba and some of the diploma programs, but I am not sure what documents exist to substantiate that and to talk about their mechanism. I am sure there is something, but I do not have that.

Mr Jackson: If I could move into the area of your proposal that has gone to the federal government, how long ago was that submitted and what feedback have you received?

Ms Warberg: It was successful in terms of getting the funding, so it has been under way now since last September and we hope to have it completed by next spring. Actually, there will be a draft ready of the competencies by this June, but with all of the feedback that we need, and community involvement and development and all of the players and stakeholders, the document will not be ready until next spring.

Mr Jackson: And this is specifically through the federal ministry?

Ms Warberg: That is right, the federal government's child care initiatives fund. We tried to secure funding in the province, of course, and were unsuccessful.

Mr Jackson: Where did you pursue that here provincially?

Ms Warberg: We went to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and we also talked to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. They have a human resource advisory committee that is looking at all of the staffing needs as a result of the New Directions for Child Care paper. I am a part of that committee as well and it was understood that competencies would need to be defined before we could go much further. We asked, but at that point they felt they did not have the money we would need to complete the project.

Mr Jackson: The interest was there, but just not the money.

Ms Warberg: Yes. There was interest with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and there was interest, certainly, from Community and Social Services—lots of interest. We got wonderful supporting letters that we were able to

mail off to the federal government, but we did not get any money, and that is what we needed to do it, because it takes time.

Unfortunately, a lot of this work right now gets done during the personal time of the people who are so committed to early childhood in this province, as you probably well know. As an example, a post-diploma program which we recently had approved was developed on weekends because none of us could get, at the time, the people we needed to support us financially to have a little bit of release time to develop it together. So we did it on Saturdays and we did it ourselves.

This time we said, "We need to have more support than this. We need to have an office. We need to have somebody answering the phone. We need to have some place where we can Xerox material. We need paper. We need a telephone line. We need money." So that is what we did. "And we need people; we need time." We have two people who have each been released for a little bit of time from their colleges to be the principals in this research group. It is a very exciting project, but again, it has taken a lot of personal time too.

Mr Jackson: Unfortunately, it has got elements of the word "struggle" around it, at a time when the funding base for colleges is in far greater jeopardy than that at our universities. That is a fair statement, but it needs a lot of clarification. But colleges are really feeling the pinch right now, so those colleges which have freed up their personnel are to be commended for making this a priority. Certainly it is helpful to our committee, as your whole presentation has been.

I have more questions, but I will respect the time of the committee in case there are some others. I know our research would like to look very carefully at some of your research material and its availability. We would like to pursue some of that material from both Manitoba and British Columbia.

Mr Neumann: I will just ask one question. What are the important ingredients or factors to help a professional working in day cares across Ontario to identify high-risk children and to assist the system to ensure that there is good communication from the day care centres to the entry point in the education system so that whatever identification is done is not lost?

Ms Warberg: That is a slightly different question, but I think I have got an answer.

First of all, the training of the people who are the primary care givers, who are the front-line

people: Most commonly what is experienced is that the workers working with the children, who are the early childhood educators, are the first people to recognize that there may be something that needs to be looked at further with this child—not the parents necessarily, although sometimes it is, and it may not be the paediatrician either. It may be the person who is that front-line care giver.

In that case, given the important role they play in so many other areas, not just the identification of special needs, those people need to have the training that will set off the bell in their heads to say: "This is a little bit different. We need to look at this further."

To support that kind of yellow light flashing, we need to have specialized personnel who are trained resource teachers, people who have advanced specialized training and are familiar with special needs and the identification of special needs and can conduct assessments, who can be at the end of a telephone and who can go out to the early childhood centre and also observe and work with the staff to gather further information about that child and that child's development.

There is a second part to your question.

Mr Neumann: The linkages between the day care centres and the entry point, school, with the boards of education. We were discussing it last week, and I realize that it is a bit out of the area you are here to discuss. In your view, are there currently good linkages or do they need to be developed?

Ms Warberg: There have not been good linkages, but they are developing. They are developing as more and more child care centres are housed in school settings. We start to get past who is responsible for what and who makes how much money and we just look at, "Here's Johnny; he's had a tough morning; I want you to know that this and this happened," so that the teacher is therefore informed of that child's progress in the afternoon.

The linkages have not been good, but they really are improving. They are much better, certainly in common professional development activities for both groups working together, somehow maintaining continuity of care throughout the day, which is so vital.

Right now it is so hard to staff school-age, as you know. There is before-school care, there is lunchtime care, there is after-school care. If you can find somebody who wants to work from 7:30 to 9, 12 to 1 and 3:30 to 5 for very little money and go back and forth from his or her home to do

that, then you have accomplished a major milestone. Then to get those people where they can talk to the teacher where they are recognized for what they have to offer has been a whole other major step we have had to take, but there are some people out there.

Centres have looked at some more innovative staffing models, and what we are finding is that with more frequency and time, as people begin to talk to each more about the kids and forget about the artificial boundaries and look at the child, the heart of the matter, they are able to communicate with one another quite effectively. But that needs support that says—maybe professional development activities. Certainly there are lots of others, but that is just one idea.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. I have three short questions. First of all, are you familiar with some of the American states and how they work in their linkages?

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Ms Warberg: Yes.

The Chair: My understanding of the BC situation in other faculties, not this one particularly, was that they were starting to feel the pressure from American schools taking a lot of their students, straight transfers, as they do in other faculties. Did you find that to be a case in BC or Manitoba in your field, that the American schools were taking the community college or diploma graduates into their programs, as you say Ryerson is doing?

Ms Warberg: Things like a third-year direct entry because of the associate degree model, a two-year, four-year model?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Warberg: That has not been something that has been reported to me with great frequency, no.

The Chair: In northern Ontario, for example, a kid can go from Cambrian College of Allied Arts and Technology to Lake Superior State College. It is the same tuition for kids in northern Ontario. We found a number of cases where the kids would go right in and complete their four-year degree, come back and do whatever they were doing, particularly in nursing and other—

Ms Warberg: Do not forget, early childhood educators do not have a lot of money and they are on the poor end of the spectrum.

The Chair: What I was saying was that a kid can go to Lake Superior State, if he is from northern Ontario, go to north Michigan and Lake

Superior State in the Sault, Michigan, for the same tuition as he would get at Laurentian University or Lakehead University.

Ms Warberg: Okay, the same tuition.

The Chair: The same tuition, and they are given that kind of access. So we almost have a third ghost university which is in the United States.

Ms Warberg: Yes.

The Chair: The thing is that they allow the straight transfer, so the early childhood education grad from Cambrian could go to Lake Superior State, if it had such a program—I know they do in nursing and teaching—and come back with his or her four-year degree. I just wondered if you had heard of that.

Ms Warberg: Not in early childhood, no.

The Chair: Certainly in nursing.

Dr Doxey last week talked about the kid who goes in around Christmastime and does Christmas decorations in day care and then in the afternoon kindergarten and then back in day care again doing the same thing. Could this be because they are studying Piaget in your program, in Ryerson and in the faculty of education before they finish; this could be somewhat parallel? That is rhetorical. I will not ask for a comment.

Ms Warberg: I am smiling.

The Chair: I would like to thank you very much on behalf of the committee.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you go back to what you have given us on the program at Centennial College, it looks like there is only one program specifically on the childhood special needs, which I presume would be focusing on early identification.

Ms Warberg: Right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is the last semester.

Ms Warberg: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: How many hours would that be?

Ms Warberg: It would be 64.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I presume when you send us the information, that will give us a better idea of what in fact is involved in that?

Ms Warberg: I think course outlines would be a good idea, because they would give you detailed learning objectives. What I am concerned about is the amount of information I may end up sending you, but I will send it to you none the less. I will send you course outlines and descriptions for all of these—bedtime reading.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes.

The Chair: I do not know why everybody thinks that this is all bedtime reading, because some of it is the rest of the day. Anyway, we just carry on. Thank you very much.

Ms Warberg: You are welcome. I will leave this with you?

The Chair: Yes, please, and we can work out the exchange of any of the other information,

Ms Warberg: I will send that to you.

The Chair: I apologize for keeping the other group waiting, but I am sure that a lot of the similar issues are there. I would like to welcome Leslie Atkinson and Karen Scheremeta from the Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario. If you just want to take a second and grab a coffee or something, we will get started momentarily.

Before we start, just for the information of the members of the committee, the organization is taking pictures around the room and that is who the photographer is. Just in case anybody is asking about that, they requested that. They left us a card and everything. Apparently it is copacetic.

We will proceed and turn it over to Leslie and Karen.

PRIVATE HOME DAY CARE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Ms Atkinson: It is a privilege to be asked to present to this committee today.

Before addressing the specific issues related to early childhood education training and its impact on children, it is necessary to define the Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario and the service it represents. The service is different from that provided by child care centres; therefore, so are our concerns around early childhood education.

Private home day care in Ontario is basically child care in private homes, which are supervised by licensed agencies. Under the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, the private home day care service is defined as:

"Temporary care for five or fewer children under 10 years of age, in a private residence other than the home of a parent or guardian of any of the children. This care is given for compensation or reward, under the supervision of a private home care agency, and must not exceed a period of 24 hours.

Provincial regulations codified under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act identify the responsibilities of the various parties involved in providing private home day care.

Licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, each private home day care agency is responsible for the operation, supervision and maintenance of a private home day care program. In turn, home visitors, who are employed by the agency, recruit, train, assess and supervise the providers, or care givers, who provide child care in their homes. The home visitor also acts as a resource for the parents and children registered in the program.

The agencies support and resource providers via home visits, training workshops, toy and equipment lending, newsletters, play groups, group meetings and special events and provide access to resources such as social workers and counselling services. The number and nature of resources available varies from agency to agency.

I would like to say a few words about the history of private home day care. Private home day care programs in Ontario were originally established in the late 1960s to meet the growing demand for child care. In particular, private home day care was to address the need for a more flexible type of care for rural areas, native reserves, shift and extended-hour workers, emergency and temporary care and handicapped and other children with special needs. Most important, private home day care offered parents a choice in the type of quality care they wanted for their children, the choice of a supervised home environment.

As with other types of child care, Community and Social Services shares with municipalities the cost of subsidizing the service to families in financial need. In 1971, subsidies were made available for home day care programs operated directly by municipalities or through purchase-of-service arrangements with other agencies.

In 1978, the Day Nurseries Act was amended to allow Community and Social Services to license private home day care agencies. However, the actual implementation of licensing did not occur until 1984. As you can see, private home day care is still a relatively new service.

The importance of considering home-based child care in discussions pertaining to early childhood education is that the majority of children in Ontario are in some form of home-based care. The present data indicate that only 12 per cent of all child care in Ontario is licensed. Licensed private home day care forms one per cent of that. The other 88 per cent of all child care is unlicensed or informal home day care.

From this standpoint, it is recognized that home day care is the predominant form of child care in Ontario. Be it licensed or unlicensed, home day care and latchkey arrangements represent 89 per cent of all child care arrangements. Thus, home day care is an area deserving of much more investigation. To date, there has been a disproportionate amount of money spent on research pertaining to early childhood education for a rather small percentage of the population, the 12 per cent in centre-based care.

Most provinces in Canada have now developed a licensed or formal system for delivering private home day care, or family day care, as it is sometimes called. The licensed agency model operates in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, while the remaining provinces and territories operate a system of directly licensed homes.

The service profile of home-based care is of importance as it serves a different population than that of centre-based care and therefore has different needs.

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There are currently 102 agencies in Ontario. The five agency types are: municipal, nonprofit, commercial, native band and approved corporation. Approximately 13,000 children are registered in the program in Ontario, ranging in age from six weeks to 10 years of age, including a small percentage of children up to 12 years of age for special circumstances; 80 per cent of these children are subsidized.

A survey completed in 1988 as part of the Ministry of Community and Social Service's fundamental review of private home day care shows that 33 per cent of the children in private home day care fall into the category of infants and toddlers, compared to 10 per cent in child care centres. These early years are known to be crucial in terms of child development, and yet early childhood education training is still lacking in this area. The training presently covers childhood development between the ages of two and six years. In child care centres, 78 per cent of the children fall into this category of preschool and kindergarten, compared to only 42 per cent in private home day care.

The percentage of school-age children is also higher in private home day care at 22 per cent, compared to the centres' 12 per cent. This is another age group that ECE training does not address.

In addition, private home day care is the only service that routinely provides care for children over 10 years of age. These are usually children

with special circumstances and account for three per cent of the service.

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario was formed in 1982 at a conference cosponsored by the Ministry of Community and Social services and Metro Toronto private home day care agencies. A decision was made by the then existing agencies to form a provincial association to represent the specific concerns of this unique model of child care.

The organizing committee for the association consisted of representatives from the four provincial regions designated by the ministry. In 1983, the Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario, or PHDCAO, was incorporated as a nonprofit organization with legal bylaws. In 1985, charitable status was granted. By 1988 a staffed provincial office was established in Toronto with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Today the mission statement of the PHDCAO is to promote, develop and support home-based child care services for families through licensed agencies. The objectives are to encourage and promote: (1) communication among organizations engaged in the planning, financing and delivery of services; (2) public education and awareness; (3) the adoption and maintenance of appropriate standards of practice; and (4) the continuing education and professional development of all those involved in the provision of services.

The board reflects the different geographic areas and the many diverse agencies, from one-person operations to the large municipally sponsored services and multiservice agencies. Membership in the PHDCAO is open to licensed private home day care agencies, incorporated provider associations, interested persons, including parents, students, providers, professionals and other organizations. There are currently 102 agencies, 13,000 children in care and approximately 5,500 child care providers in Ontario. Our membership includes 86 agencies and their staff, 12 associate members and 67 professionals.

The rapid rate of growth and activity in the private home day care sector over the past eight years has been tremendous. This indicates a need to further develop the service. The number of agencies has doubled over seven years, from 39 in 1981 to 78 in 1988. Now, two years later, there has been a further increase of 30 per cent.

The number of children in care has also grown, from 5,000 in 1982 to 10,000 in 1988 to 13,000

in 1990. Provider numbers have risen as well, from 2,000 to 4,500 to a current 5,500.

As the service expands, so does the demand for programs, training, information and educational materials.

The service the association presently provides falls into three main categories: education, public awareness and project co-ordination. We address the specialized educational needs through provincial conferences, regional workshops, a resource centre, training videos and a quarterly newsletter.

From a public education and awareness standpoint, the association produces promotional materials to recruit providers and clients. We also provide information on private home day care to a wide variety of people including educators, researchers, the government, potential clients and providers, consultants and many other organization within Ontario and from across Canada. Representatives from the association also speak at various forums, conferences and educational institutions.

The PHDCAO co-ordinates activities to improve the service, such as the development of customized computer software and comprehensive insurance policies.

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario also prepares briefs and reports for governments and has representatives on the following provincial government committees: funding advisory, direct operating grant, fundamental review of private home day care, school-age review and human resources, which is currently addressing early childhood education. The association is also presently contracted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to review enrolment-based funding in private home day care.

Though much time has been devoted here to explaining private home day care, the association wishes to stress to educators and decision-makers: (1) the majority of children in Ontario are being served in both licensed and unlicensed home day care; (2) the service is unique from that of centre-based care; and therefore (3) it is imperative that this sector is acknowledged in discussions and decisions impacting on early childhood education.

I would now like to introduce Karen Scheremeta from the region of Halton children's services and a board member of the association. She will address the specific issues of early childhood education as they relate to private home day care.

Ms Scheremeta: The first issue that I am going to address is the impact of early childhood education on children.

At the first ministers' conference last November, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney voiced a concern over what he considered a poor return on massive investments in education. He stressed the importance of preschool education to prepare children for elementary, high school and university. He cited examples to demonstrate how the education system is failing, including a study that shows 17 per cent of Canadian high school students to be functionally illiterate.

An even greater indication of the importance of the problem and the world's desire to improve educational standards is the fact that the United Nations has called 1990 the Year of Literacy. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will be spending an increased amount of time and effort trying to address this issue this year.

Child poverty is another major issue that relates to education and the need for quality child care. Nationally, 1.2 million children are living in poverty. More than one half of these children live in single-parent households headed by women. The number of working poor families is increasing and roughly 60 per cent of these consist of couples with children.

It is a widely accepted fact that the cycle of poverty and inadequate education is a problem in Ontario. The province has in fact begun to implement positive measures to break the cycle. These changes were recommended by the Social Assistance Review Committee in its report called *Transitions*.

The area that was not addressed properly in *Transitions* was child care. Even Judge George Thomson, chair of the committee, acknowledged this weakness.

The importance of child care as it relates to child welfare is documented in the MCSS study, *The Nature and Effectiveness of Family Support Measures in Child Welfare*. It states:

"Many studies indicate that the number of children in care who are able to return to their own homes increased significantly when parents received supportive resources such as day care and adequate financial assistance. If these supports and resources were in place to start with, the number of children coming into the child welfare system would fall significantly."

It is a known fact that early childhood education has a positive impact on children, and yet Ontario has not properly implemented an adequate system of child care for all children.

The following list is a compilation of results of the benefits of high-quality early childhood programs from a variety of studies, both short and long term, compiled by the United States National Association for the Education of Young Children. If you would like to access the research, references have been acknowledged in the materials that you have received here today.

The first question is, how do high-quality early childhood programs benefit children?

Children enrolled in early childhood programs tend to be more successful in later schooling, are more competent socially and emotionally and have greater opportunities for good health than children who are not enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs.

Related to school success, children who attended high-quality early childhood programs functioned at an increased intellectual capacity during their initial years of primary schooling; they showed short-term gains on tests of cognitive ability; they maintained IQ gains three to four years after the program ended; they were assigned to special education programs less frequently; they were retained in grades less often; and they were more likely to graduate from high school and to pursue post-secondary education or training.

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In social and emotional competence, children who attended also experienced no significant disruption in attachment to their mothers; they rated themselves more competent in school; they showed greater achievement, motivation and commitment to schooling; they exhibited more appropriate classroom and personal behaviour during the primary and secondary school years; they were more responsible, talkative and initiating in social situations; and they showed more interest in participation in classroom activities.

As related to improved opportunities for health, these children had greater access to health care and improved physical health; they received better dental care; and they demonstrated improved nutritional status and better nutritional practices.

The families of children in programs have also been found to benefit. Mothers viewed themselves and their children as more competent. Parents' involvement in the program led to changes for other children in the family, similar to the benefits for their child in the preschool program. Children had more contact with relatives and were better integrated into a kin social network.

Last, there are also economic and social benefits that have lasting effects on their communities. A United States study shows a cost saving of between \$3 and \$7 for every \$1 spent on a year of early childhood education.

There is reduced unemployment and enhanced lifetime earnings potential for children who had attended high-quality early childhood programs; increased earning powers of mothers due to their expanded opportunities to participate in training and employment; lowered reliance on social and welfare services and associated cost savings; lower crime rates and less delinquent behaviour during the teen years for children; fewer pregnancies and births through age 19; and improved access for community residents to educational, health and social service systems.

There has also been a Canadian review of the cost benefits of preschool child care programs prepared for the federal government's special committee on child care by Vera Cameron. Her results show that:

"In addition to the benefits of preschool programs for society and the mother (or father), indirect benefits from preschool programs include the creation of jobs and hence increased consumer spending, savings on unemployment insurance, increased income tax revenues for government, cost savings to federal and provincial governments and revenue generated by parent fees."

"Apart from these benefits, preschool programs produce less tangible benefits that are almost impossible to measure in dollar terms. For example, what is the dollar value of an improved family climate resulting from financial stability due to a mother's ability to participate in the labour force?"

"How can one put a dollar value on the reduced level of stress among families who can be assured that their children are receiving quality care? How does one monetarily value the increased psychological and emotional stability for high-risk children resulting from preschool? Preventable developmental retardation and lost human potential cannot be measured in dollars."

As you can see, the evidence is there. Early childhood education does make a difference. It is now in the hands of the government to accept the facts and to develop a comprehensive system that is affordable and accessible to all.

The next thing I would like to talk to you about is the training of the early childhood educator.

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario recognizes that early childhood education is an extremely important field of study

because of the direct influence that is has on children. The development and behaviour of children are a reflection of the current theories being taught to early childhood educators. Not only are the theories important, but so is the ability of the educator to understand and translate the theories into practice, for they impact not only on a child's education but also on his values, his attitudes, his motivation, his socialization and his self-worth.

The issue of early childhood education and its positive influence on children is no longer in question. Research has proven repeatedly that this is so. Even the long-term benefits have now been addressed by longitudinal studies with 20-year time frames. The important issue here is the value placed on the job of educating young children and the adequacy of the training that the educators receive.

As stated earlier, it is now a given that early assessment and identification of developmental and behavioural problems is important. It is also a given that early education has a positive impact on children. Yet there is very little value placed on the job of early childhood educator, or ECE, and the wages are extremely low. The cyclical effect is that staff turnover is high and the field is having more difficulty in attracting top-quality people.

At present, the term "ECE" can mean any variety of educational backgrounds, from a two-year college diploma or a four-year university degree to a post-graduate masters or doctorate. These do not even include all the various equivalency options that are accredited by the Association of Early Childhood Education of Ontario, or AECEO.

Today's current shortage of well-qualified ECEs is a major problem facing child care, both in Canada and the United States. This shortage has been acknowledged by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and a large-scale study is now in process called the human resources project.

There has recently been a comprehensive examination of this problem in the United States, and because this is an area where the issues are known to be similar to those in Ontario, it is worth while to review its findings.

The US national child care staffing study was just completed in November 1989, and it researched the correlations in the child care sector between the critical staffing shortage, training, wages and the effects these areas have on child development. Their findings indicate that inadequate compensation is fueling a rapidly

increasing exodus of trained personnel from child care. The failure to meet the needs of educators results in lower-quality child care.

The highlights of the major findings of this study are:

1. The education of child care teaching staff and the arrangements of their work environment are essential determinants of the quality of service children receive.

2. Among the adult work environment variables, the most important predictor of quality of care children receive is staff wages, and higher wages related to a better educated staff.

3. Despite having higher levels of formal education than the average American worker, child care teaching staff earn abysmally low wages, less than one half as much as comparably educated women and less than one third as much as comparably educated men in the civilian labour force.

4. Staff turnover has tripled over the last decade.

5. Children attending lower-quality centres and centres with more staff turnover were less competent in language and social skills.

It was also noted that low- and high-income children were more likely than middle-income children to attend centres providing higher-quality care. This is also true in Ontario, because middle-income people are neither capable of paying for the full cost of high-quality care nor eligible for subsidy.

Because this committee will be hearing presentations or you already have heard presentations from other groups representing early childhood education in general, our association would like to take the opportunity to address ECE training and how it relates to private home day care; specifically, how it relates to the positions of home visitor and provider, the paraprofessional provider being the primary care giver with the professional home visitor supervising and resourcing.

First the home visitor: The home visitor's role is very broad and goes well beyond the parameters of early childhood education. The home visitor, an employee of the agency, is a fieldworker who is required to engage in a variety of activities and is responsible to and for a number of people. The responsibilities are: (1) to the children, to ensure quality of care and to oversee the implementation of developmental programs; (2) to the family, to educate and support, to place children and to act as a liaison between the provider and the parents; and (3) to the providers.

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As a fieldworker, the home visitor spends a large amount of time on the road supervising and resourcing providers in their homes. They recruit and assess the provider and their home, educate and support, do home visits and inspections, ensure compliance with ministry regulations, direct program planning and complete evaluations. The result is a large administrative workload in addition to an ongoing responsibility to the agency for community outreach. The 1988 MCSS survey indicates that the average case load for a home visitor is 20 providers and over 50 children.

At present the MCSS requires that home visitors have an ECE or equivalent, plus two years experience in a child care setting. According to the 1988 survey, 59 per cent of home visitors have an ECE degree or diploma, 17 per cent have ECE and a BA and 17 per cent have other certificates or diplomas such as teaching or psychology. Seven per cent did not respond. The survey indicated that the majority of home visitors have previous work experience as teachers or supervisors in a child care centre.

The problem concerning training for home visitors is that the ECE training does not address the specific job. The home visitor role goes beyond child development and therefore training is needed in fieldwork, similar to that of a social worker, in addition to training in management.

Norman Parks, consultant for the MCSS human resources project, led a workshop at the PHDCAO conference in 1989 to collect information specific to the unmet training needs of home visitors. The needs fell into three main categories: fieldwork, education and administration. The unmet training needs in fieldwork included communication, counselling, observation in group skills and community development. In education the needs included educating adults, child development for infants and school-age children, specialized programs, family studies and multiculturalism. Under the category of administration were public relations, management and administrative skills, reporting, legislation and stress management.

Presently agencies cope by developing their own methods to meet the needs of the multifaceted role, such as training home visitors on the job and/or paying for their continued education. This is a very expensive option and it creates many inconsistencies across the province. The other option that some agencies have exercised is to hire staff from a variety of backgrounds, such as

social work, nursing and psychology, to draw on the broader experience of a diverse team.

At least the unmet training needs of home visitors have now been acknowledged by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and will be examined further in the human resources project.

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario has developed a statement regarding the present qualifications of home visitors for the human resources project. It is as follows:

The minimum of an ECE diploma with several years of experience is regarded as the primary qualification for home visitors in private home day care programs. However, many member agencies have a long, successful experience of employing a team of home visitors with a variety of professional qualifications; for example, social work, teaching, psychology or nursing. This multidisciplinary approach to staffing has enriched these programs. The association supports such diversity, provided that each home visitor has a knowledge of child development as well as experience in working with children. The ability to work effectively with adults and children, skills in assessment and program planning and the ability to establish positive interpersonal relationships with adults are equally important qualifications. Where any of these skills are lacking, additional course work may be required.

The provider is the person who is primarily responsible for the care of the children. It is the provider and her family who will have a significant impact on the type of care received. Only a small percentage, four per cent, of providers have an early childhood education degree or diploma. Another 10 per cent have a degree or diploma in some other field. Private home day care operates on the premise that the personality of the provider and the home environment is crucial in providing home day care and that specific training will be the responsibility of the home visitor as well as the agency.

The 1988 Ministry of Community and Social Services survey lists the most important factors rated by home visitors in appraising new providers. They are: safe environment, caring personality, love of children, common sense, the location of the home, experience with children and a willingness to learn.

The quality of care then depends upon a vast number of factors, including the home visitor's ability to assess good providers, the provider's past experience and the ability of the provider to

put new information into practice. According to the research mentioned earlier, the fact that providers have little or no formal ECE training would indicate that the quality of child care would be lower. This, however, does not prove to be true.

First, there is very little research done in home-based care and even less pertaining to the agency model which gives the provider professional support and training.

The most recent Canadian study, the Victoria day care research project, was conducted in British Columbia by Pence and Goelman. This was a two-year study of children, parents and care givers in licensed centre care, licensed home day care and unlicensed home day care. They examined quality from several perspectives: characteristics of the provider, the child care environment and program, children's experiences in child care and the children's performance on standardized measures of language development within the context of family background. You might note that home day care in British Columbia is directly licensed and does not have the support system inherent in the agency model of Ontario.

The research findings indicated, however, that unlicensed home day care settings scored consistently lower than the licensed home day cares and centres; that licensed day care environments provided children with greater stimulation to facilitate language and reasoning and learning activities than did unlicensed settings; that the majority of high-quality home day care was licensed care and that children in high-quality family day care homes participated in activities such as structured fine motor activities, gross motor activities, information and reading with greater frequency than their counterparts in low-quality homes. It was also found that in low-quality homes the activities that children engaged in with greater frequency were educational and noneducational television-watching.

Pence and Goelman also found that children from low-resource families were overrepresented in lower-quality home day care in British Columbia. In Ontario this finding would be reversed. Because 80 per cent of the clientele in private home day care is subsidized and the licensed homes and the providers must meet certain standards, it means that the low-resource families are receiving the highest quality of home day care. This corresponds to the findings previously mentioned from the national child care staffing study.

The development of private home day care in a sense was begun as a compromise by the government, a method to create an inexpensive form of day care. Now, although it is not as inexpensive as once thought, it is an option that parents want and it does address the need for flexible care.

The training of providers is an ongoing concern because of the correlation between training and the quality of care. In fact, the major role of home visitors and of agencies is training.

The fact that there is a system of low-paid paraprofessionals caring for children is as a result of society's outdated view of child care, and thus its low priority on the government's agenda. If a job in child care is seen only as an extension of women's familial role of rearing children, professional preparation and adequate compensation seem unnecessary; and attributing child care skills to women's biological tendencies implies that teaching jobs are more an avocation than an economic necessity. Though these assumptions contradict the economic, educational and social realities of today, government is still refusing to acknowledge that children are important. Thus, a comprehensive child care service is still lacking, the wages are low and the training inadequate and/or inconsistent.

I would like to conclude with an excerpt from a report written by economist Monica Townson. The report is called *Our Children Are Worth It: The Cost and Benefits of a National Child Care System for Canada*. She says:

"Economists have sometimes tried to use cost-benefit analysis to help policymakers decide whether or not to implement a social program. But it's not easy to do, because you have to put a dollar value on the benefits to see if they outweigh the costs. And many of the benefits of social programs cannot be measured in dollar terms.

"A universal, publicly funded child care system would have major benefits for Canada's children and their parents: it could bring enhanced early childhood development for our children; make it possible for mothers who are in the workforce while their children are young to develop stable and continuous work patterns, which would improve their lifetime earnings and help them to accumulate a decent pension for their retirement years; improve productivity of parents who don't have to worry about child care arrangements they have made for their children while they are at work; and make child care services available to all children who need them, regardless of socioeconomic status.

"All these benefits are difficult to measure in dollar terms, so they often get overlooked in discussions about child care.

"There are other, spinoff benefits and cost savings that can be measured or at least estimated. A national child care system would create jobs. That would lower the unemployment rate and mean savings in unemployment insurance benefits. And that's just one example.

"Child care is a service that the majority of preschool children need. Failure to meet that need could well mean serious long-term consequences for Canadian society—and that is a cost Canada cannot afford."

Thank you for your time and for your attention.

The Chair: Thank you so much. I very much appreciate a comprehensive presentation to this committee.

Ms Poole: First of all, thank you for your presentation today. It does not hurt to be reminded of a few of the facts that you put in your brief. I can recall about four or five years ago when I was an ordinary person and I came to a committee to give a brief on behalf of the Women's Perspective Advisory Committee. Much of our brief went back to the high school case study from Ypsilanti, Michigan, which I notice you have quoted extensively from as far as the benefits of early childhood education are concerned, and also the Canadian report by Monica Townson. It really has brought back a sense of déjà vu when I am seeing some of this information in another presentation, but it does help to have it highlighted.

I would like to ask you a couple of questions on points you have made in your brief. First of all, on page 9 you refer to the staff turnover, which has tripled in the last decade. That certainly is a very grave concern in the child care field.

Over the last few years the provincial government, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, has put forward a very progressive and very aggressive program to try to increase child care workers' salaries. This has been more in the former child care workers' salaries as opposed to the agencies represented, I think, by your association. The city of Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto have also put forward very aggressive programs. Do you see this changing this fact at all? Do you see the turnover being less radical since the wages are going up or have you not seen that yet? Is it too early to tell?

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Ms Scheremeta: I think it is too early to tell, but all the direct operating grants that the federal

government put forth were a good starting point. For some child care workers their wages were so low, even to add another \$4,000 or \$5,000 on still is not bringing them to the \$20,000 level. There need to be further incentives for child care workers.

With the issue of profit and nonprofit child care, the profit centres are only receiving 50 per cent of the grants, which also makes for a high turnover of staff in those centres, because they are not receiving quite as high salaries as perhaps some other workers in child care centres.

Ms Poole: So you see it as good initiative but not quite where we have to reach?

Ms Scheremeta: That is right.

Ms Poole: I certainly agree with you about the low salaries. I remember five or six years ago being utterly appalled at seeing child care workers receiving \$12,000 or \$13,000, and that was not the least bit uncommon. We certainly have a long way to go before we get them up to where they should be.

I have one other question, about the home visitors. I think somewhere in your brief you mention that they have a case load of about 20 families or 50 children. What would a home visitor's day be like? Would they visit so many families every week? Would they try to get to every family every week? How does their time get scheduled?

Ms Scheremeta: Under the Day Nurseries Act, a home visitor can actually supervise approximately 25 home day care providers. Again, from agency to agency it would vary, but the average is about 20.

The Day Nurseries Act states that the homes have to be visited once every three months. However, most agencies set a criterion that the homes are visited once every four to six weeks so they have that support on an ongoing basis.

Speaking from my own agency in Halton region, I know we follow the standard of at least once every four to six weeks. If there are any kinds of crisis situations or the provider indicates that she needs more help or support, then that home visitor is available for her.

Ms Poole: If it was four to six weeks, that would be 20 to 30 days. Make it a Monday to Friday schedule. Would your home visitor spend a full day when he was visiting a provider? Is that normally how it would work?

Ms Scheremeta: No, they would not spend a full day. There are actually quite a few other activities that are involved in a home visitor's day. One is continued recruitment of providers,

because there is a turnover of providers as well. This is a very lengthy process, as a home visitor goes out to visit a prospective provider, interviews her, gives her the information and will probably visit her up to three times before that home would actually be approved.

Again, it also depends upon the agency. For myself, coming from a municipality, our home visitors go out to see the parents who are eligible for subsidy, so they are also doing the financial end of it. Then that is updated on a six-month basis. In some of the private agencies they would be going out to see the parents to do an interview with them to attempt to match their needs with the provider. They would try to look at what the parents would like and the kind of environment they would like to see their child in and try to match them up with a suitable provider.

There are also a lot of reports that get filled out. There are quite a few different policies, admission papers and that kind of thing, so there are a great number of administrative tasks that go with that job as well.

Ms Poole: Do I have time for one final question? Speaking of reports, in the instance that a provider does not meet the provincial standards that are set out and the home visitor becomes aware of this, I assume that at first there is probably an opportunity for that person or that family to bring the standards up to scratch and to provide the care necessary. But if that fails, what is the procedure? Obviously, the agency would say, "I'm sorry, we can't accept you under our umbrella." Would there be any mechanism for reporting to the province so that other agencies are made aware that the provider does not meet provincial standards? I think you have 86 out of 102, but what about those other 24 agencies?

Ms Scheremeta: No, there is no mechanism for that.

Ms Poole: Is this something you would recommend, or do you think it is just very difficult to have it be uniform?

Ms Scheremeta: I think it is difficult. Depending on the circumstances, I would recommend it. I know, for instance, in our region we do a check with the children's aid society and the police department before that home is even approved. So if there were any concerns, if those two agencies did not recommend the provider, then we would not enter into an agreement with her.

It could happen that during the course of that agreement something serious did happen in that home and the agreement would be terminated. Say, for instance, if there were some concerns

around discipline, there would be no mechanism to another agency to find out unless that agency was actually in the same region. That provider could move to another area and start home day care again.

Ms Poole: And the information does not flow the other way? You would not report to the children's aid society or to the police if you had serious concerns?

Ms Scheremeta: If there were serious concerns, yes, we would be obligated to report.

Ms Poole: But not if it was something less serious, such as just a disagreement over the method of disciplining.

Ms Scheremeta: No. There is no mechanism for that.

Ms Poole: So another agency could use that same provider?

Ms Atkinson: I think what is interesting to note around that is that there is nothing to stop a person who has been terminated by an agency, whose home has been closed by an agency, going and opening up and caring for children informally. There is no way you can label the home or the person, just as with any person who has been convicted of a crime and released. If someone has been convicted of sexual abuse and wants to look after children later on, he or she can do that in this society and there is no way of indicating to people looking for care that that person has been convicted.

Ms Poole: Just as, I suppose, with individual parents there is no way, as long as they stay within the law, of determining if they are good parents or not.

Ms Scheremeta: No.

The Chair: To follow up on that, except where a parent would investigate or ask what the background is of that individual offering that care.

Ms Atkinson: If it is done through an agency, then they would be relying on the agency to provide them with that information. But because most of the children are being looked after in homes informally, there is no way to access that information. The police do not release that information to parents, nor would the CAS. It is up to the word of the person you are making the arrangement with.

Mr Keyes: I echo Dianne's comments. The presentation provided an excellent review of the literature on early childhood and day care and home care, etc, but I felt there was something

lacking. Please forgive me; it is not a criticism. I hope it will help.

I found a lack of telling me where, in trying to bring to the attention of this committee, you had specific concrete recommendations. I saw it as an overall one saying, "The government must recognize the greater value of appropriate home care for young children and that there needs to be increased wages."

I think back that the government has looked at day care, as an example, and said over the next two or three years it is going to be providing another 4,000 subsidized spaces. They have spent some money on increasing wages for the people.

I guess I am looking for something a little more succinct in your presentation. I would ask you, perhaps after you leave, if you might review it between yourselves and maybe even send something back to us. It may be unfair to ask, and I have never asked that in all the months the committees have been sitting on this. I just felt you had done so much, looking at the research on it and the value of it, but then I thought you had missed the chance to tell us where you would prioritize the things that should be done, as a committee, when we try to report on this whole business of home care and early childhood education.

Ms Atkinson: We could address that now. We might follow it up with a set of specific recommendations.

Mr Keyes: Please do not take it as criticism. There is just so much work done and you show such a grasp of the literature and the review of it, and your own commitment to it, so I would happy to have you tell me now, and also for any follow-up.

Ms Atkinson: Certainly there was a shortage of time to develop a presentation for the committee that adds to that problem, I think. But I think in comparison to the presentation that you just heard, for instance, there is an emphasis on early childhood education and the four- and five-year-old.

What we are saying is that most of the children are not being cared for in those early childhood education settings and that the important area of care that is not addressed by early childhood education is before that age range.

Mr Keyes: Toddlers?

Ms Atkinson: Infant to toddler range. Most of the people are being trained for between the ages of two and six, they are being trained for child care settings, they are being trained for junior

kindergarten, senior kindergarten. I think in with the changeover to increase junior and senior kindergarten in the schools there will be more emphasis on that and still it will be the other children who are not in those programs and who are younger than that age group who are not being addressed.

Mr Keyes: I guess if I follow up and help you, I would say that if you then come back with a recommendation to say that early childhood education courses at the community college level should be more focused towards infant to toddler, that becomes a major recommendation that we attribute to you and say that is one of the areas we should be reporting on. We take those types of things that you see. Priority is also one of the things that sometimes we look at to see what is possible. As we know, they cannot all be done, but which is most significant? That is the type of thing.

Ms Scheremeta: If I could just make a comment on that as well, I would agree with you that we did not bring forth some specific recommendations, but I think we talked about it in the course of the human resources project, and that is really something that is just taking place right now. We do have membership on that committee, so we are able to offer some input. There were some unmet training needs that were identified and we can make some recommendations from there, but I think it is something that is still in the process of being developed and we are still looking at right now. I think we have some ideas. They really still have not been totally finalized, but they will be through the course of this project.

Mr Keyes: We will wait for the research, because I think I know from experience of the great number in that infant to toddler area. More are looked after also in an unlicensed kind of friend situation. I think there is probably some concern expressed by some of the organizations for the necessity for the amount that goes on. Does the priority become for the government to provide more subsidized spaces for them? Is that one of the top priorities, or just where do all these fit?

Ms Atkinson: We would certainly like to see private home day care expand into that 88 per cent that is informal and unlicensed, or for the opportunity for those people to choose day care centres or private home day care. Right now people do not have the opportunity.

Mr Keyes: Thank you. I just wanted to highlight that.

The Chair: Thank you very much again for a very comprehensive presentation. There were a number of items that I think you did touch, in research and some of the other areas. I appreciate you bringing it to the attention of this committee.

This is the end of our presentation portion and I have just two items for clarification. With respect to the mileage rate, the information is available here for those people who were concerned about

that last week. If you just see Tannis, she will help to make out those mileage rates for those of us in northern Ontario and southern Ontario. I always point that out because it makes you so happy, Mr Keyes.

Anything else for the good of the cause? Seeing none, the committee stands adjourned until 10 tomorrow in committee room 1.

The committee adjourned at 1614.

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Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 23 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 23 January 1990

The committee met at 1019 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: Mr Whitestone?

Mr Whitestone: Yes, sir.

The Chair: Would you like to take a seat and we will get started. We have permission from the third party to proceed, so that is what we will do. Perhaps if you could introduce yourself and then the topic.

BRUCE WHITESTONE

Mr Whitestone: I appreciate the opportunity of being here. I am sure you are busy and I am busy myself. I work in downtown Toronto, so I am not going to be here that long. I read a while ago that the average vaudeville act lasted 12 minutes. I cannot be a juggler and I am not a tightrope walker, so this is going to be very brief.

Like everybody else who has had children go through the school system in Ontario, I have heard numberless comments. Actually, last night I heard some about a parent who complained that her daughter was not graded properly. Her daughter handed in an essay that was given an A-plus; it was filled with grammatical and spelling errors and she was very disconcerted by it. I heard from another parent—actually the same day—how upset he was that his children knew nothing about geography; they could not locate one place after another. I am sure the litany of complaints goes on. I am sure I am adding nothing new to your knowledge of them. I think they all, nevertheless, are symptoms of something and symptomatic treatment is not the answer. I think the answer is to go back to some basic causes.

I am just going to read this very briefly. As I said, it is not a vaudeville act and I am probably going to take only 10 minutes of your time to read you some suggestions. I am an economist by profession and aspiring politician by hope. I think my suggestions are not already in effect. If they are, I apologize. So off I go.

I begin by saying that this statement is obviously not intended to be a comprehensive report on our educational system. Its purpose is

only to provide suggestions for improving the quality of education in Ontario.

I have mentioned before why I thought that we should be trying to get to the root cause of some of the complaints, which I am sure all of us have heard. I begin by talking about pre-school preparation. A program should be instituted to prepare children to enter school. It should teach parents, partners in learning, how to improve the learning skills of their three-year-old and four-year-old children at home by reading and playing learning games with them each day. I think, perhaps, if the school system provided them with some of the materials to do that it would be very helpful.

Improving learning environment: I said there should be guidance counsellors—incidentally, I must apologize here. My secretary asked me, “How do you spell ‘counsellors,’” and I said, “Either way, one l or two.” So she has alternated it; it is not my fault. There should be guidance counsellors throughout elementary schools, not just in later grades, to provide students with access to help at an early age. Counsellors must relate to parents as well as students.

Community support: To increase student achievement, parents should be involved in encouraging them. You probably all have read that in Japan the mother of the school student is really the person who monitors her offspring’s progress. So I think parents should be involved in encouraging that. Local workshops involving community participants, including retirees, should be established to enable parents to promote parental sharing in this process. Printed materials should be offered. That is somewhat like what I mentioned in my first item.

There should be paid teacher assistants in classrooms. Some should work with students in need. I have heard, over and over again—whenever I suggest longer working days or longer school years the teachers all throw up their hands in horror at me and are extremely irritated because they claim they are so harassed as it is and that they are overworked. I think the answer, partly, is to have paid teacher assistants in classrooms. If we have more adults to whom the students can relate it would be salutary for students. Also, they would provide teachers with different levels of support.

Something about which I feel very strongly is encouraging excellence. Indications are that students will take advanced courses if given the opportunity. Now they are, to some extent, but foreign languages, advanced math courses as well as accelerated chemistry and physics instruction should be offered. They are offered to some extent today; not enough.

Provincial funding should be provided to ensure all gifted students an opportunity to stretch. All school boards should offer more—I underline “more”—unique programs for gifted students. Those with special abilities should be given a chance to take on fresh challenges and learning opportunities. They would go beyond normal school work and provide new and innovative teaching opportunities for teachers.

I mentioned I was an aspiring politician and I remember talking years ago about this idea. There should be annual merit scholarships of \$1,000 each to the two leading students in each high school. That would encourage academic achievement, rather than \$100 now, which I think is sort of wasted. If you really tried to have real merit scholarships of \$1,000 each, or maybe even more, it would not cost that much money and it would certainly be a prize towards which a lot of people would strive. I complement it by saying also that teachers should be eligible for individual grants to do something unusual. That would promote new programs to increase student performance.

I think we should reward teachers too; not only the pupils but the teachers should be rewarded. I am an economist by profession, as I said, and I believe that incentives do work, usually.

Assisting disadvantaged: There should be more support for school counsellors focusing on disadvantaged youth and the transition from school to work.

There should be some kind of plan to help students before and after school. I have heard this from many people. Some come to school without breakfast. Others have no place to go after school. These centres could be supervised by outside paid assistants. There was a latchkey program which did not seem to work, but we have to develop better ways to take care of students whose parents are not at home.

A prison literacy program should be set up providing up to 90 days good-time incentives for persons taking literacy training, adult education and vocational training courses. I know Dick Chaloner, who is now the Deputy Attorney General of Ontario, and I have often asked him

why people turn to crime and his reply was that frequently criminals are just plain dumb and they are also illiterate. For two years less a day, 90 days is maybe not that much to take off. Obviously, the time off for good-time incentive should be proportional to the sentence. You would not give a person 90 days off if he or she were serving only 90 days in jail. It should be proportional to the sentence. Certainly, to teach people would be an effort well spent. I gather a lot of criminals are basically illiterate.

Improved teaching: We need a better internship program to tap the province's pool of talented, experienced, nonteaching professionals. University-educated professionals, perhaps, could earn teaching certificates after a few years of carefully monitored on-the-job training and subsequent evaluation. We do this now in the high-technology field, but it should be extended to other fields as well.

One thing that sort of surprises me is that teachers' unions fight hard to keep unqualified people from teaching without an education degree to keep them out of their profession and they fight equally hard against competence tests to find out how qualified the teachers are. I do not know how you fight that, but I think one thing you try to do is encourage other people to get into the field. For example, if you have a person who is an export manager for a major company operating in Sudbury, he or she should be allowed to teach maybe a foreign language, or whatever it would be, up north where there may be a shortage of teachers. I think I would like to certify, in certain difficult fields, nonprofessionals who do not have a teaching degree.

Finally—a subject dear to my own heart—to more closely link higher education and economic development, an organization should be established. It would promote economic development utilizing the ideas and skills of students, primarily at the university level. Matching grants should be provided to research projects which have the potential to create new businesses and jobs. I do some speaking at high schools and I am amazed at the wealth of talent and innovation that some youngsters show. Certainly they are far more advanced than I was at that age—maybe I was retarded—but anyway I would like to utilize and draw on it. This could be applicable particularly in the science and technology fields.

My last point is that grants should be available to encourage small-business development in incubators on schools and university campuses by providing office and laboratory space with

shared services for new technology-based businesses and others as well.

These are just my ideas. I felt strongly enough about it, as I said, to take time off to impose on you people here to present them. That is all I have to say. If anybody wants to tell me what is wrong with them or whether he liked them or not, here I am.

1030

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I would love to get into a discussion on a lot of these issues with you, but our difficulty is that we are focusing particularly on the child care and early childhood education side of things, some of which you touch on and others you do not. I would love to get into your encouraging excellence, which seems to be an advocacy of streaming for the bright. I would love to get into a debate on that but I think I should restrict myself to the areas we are dealing with here.

Can you give me a little better idea about your notions about this preschool preparation, given that the government is moving to have junior kindergarten available everywhere, so four-year-olds now would be entering a system of education massively, one would presume. What are your notions about how that would work?

Mr Whitestone: Actually, when I originally wrote this, I said four-and-five-year-old children at home, and people said, "But you already have the junior kindergarten thing developing." From what I gather, and I am not a child psychologist and not in education, you could begin at an even earlier age. I cannot remember—I know, the program in the United States was called Operation Headstart, which was for people from very deprived backgrounds, we were told.

The earlier you can begin getting children involved in education, the better off you are. I know some parents who are almost compulsive in their behaviour to try and encourage their children to learn words and learn to read at earlier and earlier ages, but I think it can be a fun and pleasurable experience to get children ready to enter junior kindergarten. I think if you gave them the materials to do it, certain parents would do it. That is what I would like to advocate, to have the opportunity there.

We all know that with a lot of parents, neither is at home. But for those who are, who would like to do it, I think if you presented the opportunity some would grasp it; to have the materials at hand and have the government provide the materials for those who wish to take advantage of it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I sort of feel the difference with the headstart thing, of course, it

was specifically geared towards disadvantaged kids and families.

Mr Whitestone: I made that comment, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The thing is that I think parents who are staying at home with children at the moment and not putting them into the day care system, which does give them that kind of preparation; or are using family resource centres on a regular basis, which should also give them that kind of group dynamic assistance, given what we are expecting of kids in JK, which is not a great deal in terms of curriculum, as we have discovered—it has a lot to do with socialization, it seems to me, and creative play.

Most of the people who have their kids at home in that situation are already spending a lot of time on preparation. I do not know who it would be who would actually access this unless it was something which was geared to the disadvantaged, as you were suggesting later on in further recommendations in terms of counsellors.

On that side of things, we can come back to that. I have a real problem with the notion of getting more middle-class counsellors talking to poor kids about how they can make the school system work for them, frankly. I am not sure that there is any evidence that has been particularly helpful at any time over the last 50 years where it has been tried.

I am wondering if you have thought about the notion of methods of involvement, which comes back to your nonteaching professionals comments later on, including ways of getting the parents of disadvantaged kids to work within the school system and be paid for it. There are experiments happening in Canada at the moment, specifically in Manitoba, where in fact people are being trained from inner-city areas to then go into those schools and work with their kids. They are getting teacher certificates, as a matter of fact, in co-operation with the university there.

I wonder if you had given that any thought, because I really do worry if we continue to think that middle-classes are going to be able to go into Regent Park and know how to deal with the realities there.

Mr Whitestone: I have given you the caveat before that I am an economist and not in the school system but, as I understand it, there are counsellors but they are not available in the earlier grades. I was speaking to a trustee in the Waterloo school board who told me that; so I have to believe that more guidance counsellors in earlier ages would be beneficial because a lot of children in the earlier grades, I think, would

benefit by having an adult to whom they could relate. That is my own opinion. They do not apparently exist, at least in Waterloo. I think it would be helpful now.

Your other point was about how you would get middle-class assistants to work with people from a different area. I think it depends on the person, really. If you have the right kind of person, I do not think it matters too much what her or his background would be. If you had the right kind of person, I think that kind of person can relate. As difficult as it may be with certain "bad" areas, I think the right kind of person can relate. I am sure we all, in our memory, can recall people to whom we could relate. I suppose it takes a particular kind of personality who could fill that role. I guess that is my point.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will not get into a major debate about it, but if you look at any of the statistics over the years, looking longitudinally at what has happened in inner-city schools, even where there has been a major influx of middle-class professionals specifically trained, I do not think that our counsellors at the moment who are in the system—because, as you say, they come in at the later grades—have any notions about early childhood development and what the rules should be, especially in terms of the social sides of those kids' formation coming into the system. I would prefer us not to be spending our money, frankly, on more middle-classes to go in there, but empowering the people themselves to take a bit more control over their education system and make it more relevant to their own lives.

I think part of the problem is that as well-meaning as any of us might be in the middle class, if you have not lived it, then you come in with a number of biases and prejudices which can often be used to the detriment of the kids involved. I think we have seen that over the decades in Ontario, where there have been many inner-city school pilot projects, very well-meaning but largely ineffective.

The Chair: Thank you. Frank, did you have a question?

Mr Michlash: Actually, no. I think Richard has covered it.

The Chair: Anybody else?

Mr Neumann: I was wondering whether you could expand upon any thoughts you have with respect to the early ages, the decisions of the government to extend the kindergarten to junior kindergarten and the interrelationship of day care and the school system. We currently have young children in two different systems: the day care

program, various forms of day care and the school system. Do you have any thoughts or any experience in commenting in this area?

Mr Whitestone: Truthfully, no, Mr Neumann, but my thoughts are that in an early age you can get youngsters, maybe unwittingly, prepared to learn more by doing all kinds of things. I am sure you and I both have known parents who do that, as long as you do not have parents obsessed with trying to have their children excel. I think that certain learning skills can be very productive. I know enough, clearly, about the day care education process, but I just generally feel that if you begin at an early age, for example, with a foreign language, maybe ethnics could get children involved both ways. As a youngster I was able to learn at a very early age, about that age, a foreign language which I have never forgotten because I learned it conversationally.

Mr Neumann: You mentioned earlier that every one of us can recall certain individuals whom we related to better than others as children. What would you say are the characteristics of a good adult or a person who can do an exceptional job in relating to children and motivating them to learn or assisting them to learn?

Mr Whitestone: I think it is a very simple but complicated answer. I think, generally, my own prejudices are a person who is really selfless. I am afraid it would probably be—and I hope I am not offending anybody—a person with usually some kind of religious motivation and a person who is really not concerned about himself or herself but about the other person. I think that kind of personality almost always is able to establish a rapport with people, even if they are from a different social and economic stratum.

Mr Neumann: Just a point of clarification: When you mentioned a religious motivation, you are not thinking in terms of proselytizing a person.

Mr Whitestone: No, no. I just meant a person who believes there is something beyond himself or herself to which one should aspire. No, no, of course not. I would not be interested in that at all.

Mr Neumann: I did not think you meant that.

Mr Whitestone: Fair enough, sure.

Mr Neumann: What do you think are the major impediments that children face to advancing in learning in Ontario today?

Mr Whitestone: I know a major handicap is parents who do not motivate children enough. If you have both parents away and nobody is

around to supervise, hear, instruct, coach youngsters—any verb you wish—I think they suffer for it.

With both parents working for all kinds of economic reasons, I think children find that nobody is listening and nobody seems to care. If you have parents—that is why I have mentioned it a couple of times as preschool preparation—who really are involved in that, one way or the other, I think that is maybe the greatest single advantage.

I hate to say my parents were poor; they were very lacking in financial resources. But I think they always had very strong interest in educational attainment, which is something I have not forgotten. I went to both Yale University and McGill University on scholarships because my parents could not afford anything else. I think that is the main thing. Now, each person judges by his or her own subjective reaction. That is my thought; if at an earlier age you had somebody who really set the compass right, I think this is the main thing that is bumped into during life.

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Mr Neumann: You provided us with a copy of your résumé. I was interested to notice that you were a research director in Prime Minister Pearson's government. The reason that struck me is that last night I was at a meeting where I heard a speaker who was a cabinet minister and familiar with that time period. He happened to mention in his speech last night that Prime Minister Pearson had a real passion for education and a real desire to see equality of opportunity right across Canada; that no child anywhere in Canada should be deprived of the opportunity to advance in education, right to post-secondary education, and that massive amounts of money were put into this from the federal government, through the provinces, to ensure that there would be equality of opportunity across the country. Do you think we, as a Canadian society, have made progress towards that equality of opportunity and have you seen any slippages in that goal and do you share that comment of last night's speaker?

Mr Whitestone: Yes; a couple of things. You know, after the war, in North America, both the United States and Canada provided basically an opportunity for anybody, regardless of his or her financial position, to go to university. A lot of people thought that this was going to diminish and dilute the educational process. A fellow named Robert Hutchins, who was president of the University of Chicago, thought it was a horrible idea, that it would mean that excellence was going to be diminished and that we were going to have you know just a bunch of

mediocrities. Instead, it turned out that these students were generally far better than the average other person who went to university. Maybe they were older and more mature. But here you provided opportunities to all kinds of people and they took advantage of it. Heaven knows what talent lurks beneath the people who do not take advantage of a university education.

Whether there has been slippage or not, I do not feel we are doing enough. I have thought a lot about it, I am not an élitist and I think that I would like everybody to really have a chance to go to university paid for by us, the taxpayers. The slippage would certainly occur from the 1945-50 era, I do not know what it has been the past decade. But I think rather than an élitist, which maybe a person would be, I think you would have to say if everybody were given the opportunity, we as a society would benefit immeasurably by it. I think we did in the postwar era.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think it is important to note that if you compare the person of the 1960s, of the Pearson era, with what we have now in terms of the percentage of people going on to post-secondary education, specifically the groups from some of the disadvantaged areas that were identified in the past, we are doing much better now than we were then, although the poverty index is exactly the same. But for certain ethnic groups, especially, there has been some improvement.

Mr Whitestone: I clearly did not know, but I did know that the universality which was provided to veterans to go to university was the draft. I think that is a loss to us all. I think the universality which was prevalent right after the Second World War is something which I would like to see somehow restored because I think we would all benefit from having more trained people, more educated people.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I encourage you to talk to the Minister of Colleges and Universities (Mr Conway) here to whom I have said the same sort of thing without any success, but I know you have more influence with him.

Mr Whitestone: I think that should be our goal and, to answer you, I suspect we are better off overall than we were 30 or 40 years ago. But I think we certainly have had slippage in a university education.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming before the committee and thank you for your presentation.

We do have our next deputant here, Susanne Eden from the faculty of education at York

University, if you would like to step forward. While you are doing that, if any of you want to grab an extra coffee or whatever refreshment over there, please feel free. While you gather yourself I will do the same and take my own advice.

Welcome. I believe you have a presentation before us in written form and I will leave it to you to organize how you are going to present to us.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR DEANS OF EDUCATION

Dr Eden: My personal style is not generally to read from a text. However, when you give me 20 minutes to half an hour to speak on something I have spent a lifetime thinking about, I will follow my text fairly closely and then leave ample time. I hope, for questions so that I might be more informal at that time.

I am speaking to you on behalf of the Ontario Association for Deans of Education and I would like to begin by thanking you for this invitation and the opportunity to address the topic of education of young children in the context of lifelong learning.

As you will note, I am presently on staff at the faculty of education at York University.

Since the parameters of what constitutes early education are unclear in the Ministry of Education, I shall use the most current term, "early years," to refer to children ages four through seven; that is, junior kindergarten through grade 1. I appreciate that this is a departure from the proposed restructuring which identifies only junior and senior kindergarten under this umbrella, but I believe it is necessary to the discussion that follows. In keeping with the tradition in the province, I use the term "early childhood education" to refer to preschool education.

I would like to begin by paraphrasing a description by the American early childhood educator, Lillian Katz, of what it takes to be a teacher of young children. To be a teacher of young children, she suggests, you need to have a degree in education, one in psychology and one in sociology. Background in social work and medicine would be helpful and you should be a dietician and have training in music and the arts. You need to be at least fair in plumbing, carpentry and electricity and now, at 83, you are ready to teach.

I am not quite 83, but I have had a long career in education. For most of my 29 years in education I have been a consultant and coordinator of elementary programs. While much of my time has been spent outside the classroom,

I have jealously protected time to be among children. Whenever I come to feel, as we all must at times, that the world is going mad around me, I return to the company of young children and there I find my sense of humour restored and my perspective regained. It is from children that I have learned what I know about early education and the importance of childhood. My academic studies have simply given me ways of describing what children have taught me first hand. For me, being a teacher of young children has been in the truest sense a lifelong journey of inquiry.

1050

For the past four years I have been national president of the Canadian Association for Young Children, a role which afforded me the opportunity to travel across Canada and meet many teachers, child care professionals, parents and other advocates of young children. From these experiences I have been deeply touched by the many issues in care and education of young children.

Given the limited time for this presentation, I shall focus on two central issues: first, the need to acknowledge and appreciate the importance of early education and, second, the need for a policy statement from the Ontario Ministry of Education regarding the nature of early education which addresses what should young children be taught in the early years, how should they be taught and who should teach them.

First, I would like to speak about the importance of early education. In the Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts, Radwanski points out, "By the time children arrive in grade 1, their educational futures are already shaped to a significant degree by their early learning experiences." The message of this statement is not new. It can be found in many documents and reports over the past 20 years. For the most part, however, the early years have yet to receive the recognition they deserve in schools. In the light of influences upon the quality of life for young children, we ignore them at our own peril. I would like now to examine several of these influences.

Although kindergarten programs have existed in Ontario for over 100 years, universal access to kindergarten is a relatively new phenomenon. It was not uncommon prior to the 1970s for children to enter school directly into grade 1. With the exception of a few select places, senior kindergarten was considered an optional program serving little more than a period of adjustment between the informality of home and

the formality of school. Over the past two decades not only has senior kindergarten become a standard feature of virtually all schools in Ontario, but programs for four-year-olds have emerged as well.

The policy statement in the speech from the throne in April 1989 regarding universal access and the extended day for senior kindergarten in the province means that not only will more children be attending kindergarten, but they will spend greater portions of their day in school settings. Time is the child's greatest resource and it will be of the utmost importance that this time is spent in the most enabling of environments.

In addition to the extended amount of time to be spent in kindergarten, there is a potential increase in the number of children at risk of failure in the early years. One factor which contributes to the risk of failure is the changing structure of families. A recent publication from the Association for Childhood International states that in the United States the traditional family—that is, two parents with mother not employed outside the home—represents about seven per cent of today's families. Canadian statistics may be somewhat better but the evolution of nontraditional families—that is, single-parent and blended families—has a significant impact on Canadian children.

Another factor which places children at risk is poverty. The recent report issued by the New Democratic Party claims that of the 84,000 people using food banks in Toronto, over half are children. The same report states that of seven industrialized nations, Canada has the second-highest number of children living in poverty. We do not need to rely on statistical studies to tell us that children who are hungry and suffering the side effects of poverty will experience problems in school. While many children from nontraditional families and from families living in poverty do thrive, these children tend to have a much higher risk of mental health and learning problems.

A third factor which contributes to the risk of failure is the change in demographics in Ontario. Over one half of all immigrants coming to Canada settle in Ontario. In a recent report for the Ontario government on the supply and demand for teachers, my colleague Laverne Smith at York University reports that, as an example, one board in the Metropolitan Toronto area estimates that by the year 2000 over 70 per cent of its students will have a first language other than English.

The importance of kindergarten cannot be appreciated without consideration for the need to appreciate and preserve childhood. Much has been written in the past decade about the changing ideology of childhood. David Elkind, Neil Postman and others describe the consequences of forcing children to grow up too fast without time for natural development to occur. From these and other sources have come a bleak picture of the rapid erosion of childhood.

Childhood is a unique and special part of human development which shapes our entire existence. The roots of adult behaviour run deep into the earliest days of infancy. The sense of self-respect for others and development of our full potential to think and to dream emerge as the products of early childhood experience. When intellectual development is promoted at the expense of socialization and mental health, as is the case with the hurried child, the result is an adult who, for all her intellectual ability, is lost to society and, perhaps more importantly, to herself. The cost of ignoring the needs of the young in tax dollars and social services is staggering.

In short, with more children attending school for longer periods of time, the increasing number of at-risk children due to the change in social reality and demographics of Ontario, unprecedented demands will be placed on early education. When taken within the broader context of the erosion of childhood, the importance of the early years cannot be underestimated.

I would like now to move to my second point, the need for a policy statement regarding the nature of early education. I will begin by stating that the need for a clear understanding of what constitutes appropriate programs for young children is shared by teachers and parents alike. From the many meetings and discussions which I have had with parents and teachers it is clear that we share the common goal of wanting the best for our children. There is, however, more consensus of what constitutes quality programs. I would like now to examine the what, how and who of early education.

First, we need to recognize that what we believe children should learn will determine how we go about teaching them. Elementary education in the province is currently undergoing a substantial renewal as it moves away from a teacher-directed curriculum to a holistic curriculum in which children become active participants in the processes of learning. A holistic curriculum represents the finest traditions of kindergarten. It is founded on a belief that education

involves the whole person, not just the intellect. Under the false assumption that force-feeding children at an early age can gain them advantage later on in the marketplace, pressure is placed on teachers by some parents to adopt methods of teaching which focus almost exclusively upon intellectual development in the narrowest sense.

In a survey conducted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, when asked to prioritize what should be taught in school, only one per cent of the respondents identified art and music in the top priorities. Along with reading and mathematics the next highest was computers, yet in the nonsubject areas, self-worth was ranked highest. While I have no wish to devalue the role of computers in education, self-worth emerges from our whole sense of self and that cannot be attained through technology. The arts are essential for nourishing the human spirit and as such are basic skills. Much has been written about the need to redefine basic skills and clarify the fundamental aim of education. In a curriculum study of children's play, which I did for my doctoral studies at OISE, I found a positive relationship between spontaneous dramatic play in kindergarten and the development of imagination and autonomy. I observed that, given the freedom to play without inappropriate intervention, children demonstrated the development of skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, planning, negotiation, collaboration, conflict resolution and communication. These are basic marketplace skills and the genesis of lifelong learning.

The second point I would like to make with respect to the policy statement is the importance of continuity and consistency. For over 100 years the province of Ontario has been a forerunner in providing kindergarten programs which have served as models for other jurisdictions. Research in the field of child development and learning theory prompted the development by the Ontario Ministry of Education of the highly respected document *Formative Years* in 1975. Subsequent documents, including *To Herald a Child*, in 1979, *Review of the Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1* in 1983 and the *Report on the Early Primary Education Project* in 1985 have recognized the need for high-quality kindergarten and early primary programs.

The recent initiatives are the reduction of class size in the primary and in-school child care that the present government has initiated are also evidence of this. But for all the fine things we

have done, we are only beginning to address the need for continuity and consistency.

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In the report on junior and senior kindergarten and grade 1, the observation is made that "such disparity exists between the theory and practice of kindergarten and the theory and practice of grade 1, it is as if we believe that in the magic summer between June of kindergarten and September of grade 1, children grow up and grow old."

The early primary education project reports similar findings: "In many Ontario schools, kindergartens operate separately from the rest of the school. One result is that little planning and communication occurs among teachers in the primary division. Another is that there is not nearly enough opportunity for interaction among children who, although of different ages, may be at the same developmental levels."

These findings, coupled with learning theory and child development research, raise serious questions regarding the restructuring of primary education as proposed in the Ministry of Education action plan released on 7 December 1989. In this plan the kindergarten years, designated as early years, are distinct from the formative years, grades 1 through 6. While appreciating the intent to highlight the uniqueness of the kindergarten years, it would seem that by structuring school experiences by grades rather than developmental stages we may further erode the necessary link between kindergarten and grade 1, resulting in a segregation of kindergarten and hiving off of our youngest members of the the school community.

The third and final point which I wish to address is the question of who should teach young children. While teacher education programs are improving and focusing more heavily on early learning, gaps exist in the preparation of both teachers and ECE professionals. The preparation of teachers for ECE and for kindergarten have fundamentally different orientations. Teacher education in the province is committed to a broad-based liberal arts education which is in harmony with the vision on a holistic curriculum. The goal is to produce not technicians but teachers in the fullest sense of that term. This ought to be the expectation for all those to whom we entrust our children.

From the Ministry of Education action plan, it is clear that attempts are being made to reconcile the two distinct types of preparation. While we laud any measures which recognize the value and worth of ECE-trained teachers, we believe that if ECE-trained teachers are to teach kindergarten in

schools, it must be done in such a way that the present academic standards are maintained. By reducing the standard for kindergarten teaching through nondegree certification, for example, a ghetto could be created within the school in which the kindergarten teacher could be seen as a second-class citizen. It would in effect cut off opportunities for teachers in kindergarten to advance into positions of responsibility and discourage those interested in leadership from teaching in kindergarten. A more positive approach might be to consider differentiated staffing models which recognize the value of ECE-trained professionals through advanced standing, thus permitting a strengthening of kindergarten rather than a weakening.

In order to strengthen kindergarten programs and provide young children with high-quality education, higher standards for certification should be implemented. There are measures which could be taken at both the pre-service and in-service levels which would ensure that all teachers of young children possess the knowledge and skills necessary to become exemplary practitioners. One concept worth exploring is a change in the present structure of our basic certification. At the present there are three kinds of certification: primary/junior, junior/intermediate, and intermediate/senior. By introducing an early primary/primary certificate, the early years' teachers could obtain specialization within their preschool programs. This would in no way diminish the existing structure, but provide a sound base for improving what already exists.

At the in-service level, specialist certification for practising teachers could provide a distinct focus on the early years by encouraging primary specialist candidates to take one option which focuses specifically on kindergarten. These measures, along with a deliberate effort to ensure that those aspiring to leadership have some grounding in early education, would substantially improve the overall quality of education in the province.

A policy statement about the nature of early education should present a new vision of education for young children which focuses on how children learn and what teachers and parents can do to support and enhance learning. Further, the policy statement should be unequivocal in its support for a child-centred, holistic curriculum which recognizes the value of play. With such a policy statement and subsequent support for implementation, these important years will become the forerunners to an exciting new vision of

education as a lifelong process. The importance of the child and the teacher of young children could then be acknowledged and other issues, such as improving teacher education programs, addressed.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that teachers of young children are dedicated to providing quality education, but they need your support. Their knowledge, their vision and their sense of self-worth play a significant role in shaping the adult of tomorrow. If decision-makers continue to set up committees and generate reports without the will and the determination to ensure that positive changes will be affected, we stand to lose not only our children but the best of our teachers.

Marshall McLuhan once wrote, "Our age of anxiety is in great part the result of trying to do today's job with yesterday's tools and yesterday's concepts." Our future depends in large measure upon finding new ways of conceptualizing teaching and education. In finding these ways we can revitalize dedicated teachers and ensure that we offer our children the best we have to give. I would like to conclude with a quote from Teilhard de Chardin who wrote, "The future lies in the hands of those who can give tomorrow's generations valid reasons to live and to hope."

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you for the presentation and the overview. The philosophical overview you have given, I think, is very useful and one which I imagine most members of the committee concur with. So I am pleased to see that.

I guess I want to get into some of the real specifics, though, of what is going on in the training of teachers these days and of ECE people, to get a better idea of what are some of the nubs of the problems you raised on your second last page, which are a couple of the more crucial political difficulties that we have.

I want to just ask you some very basic questions, if I can, at the moment. You do not mention in your paper anywhere notions about what appropriate class sizes are for kindergarten. In fact, we have no provincial standards at all for what we should expect in JK or SK at the same time as we now have definitive standards about what is important for us to establish in grades 1 and 2.

Dr Eden: As a co-ordinator of programs whose responsibilities—and probably the better part of my responsibilities included early education—and I am speaking here now from a personal perspective, not from the deans of faculties of education—it caused a great deal of

concern initially when we saw that the class sizes for primary would be mandated but those for young children would not. Having travelled extensively through this province and elsewhere, I am quite aware that there are kindergarten classes in excess of 25 and 30. In other words, we might have a class of 30 five-year-olds or four-year-olds side by side with a class of 19 grade 1s, and that does not make a lot of sense. I think, before we address those kinds of issue, however, we have to come to terms with what is it we want of early education. That is not clear.

Again, just reducing class size does not, in my mind, translate into better programs. By reducing class size we also have to address some of these other things that I have raised.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One presumes that they are linked, however.

Dr Eden: Of course they are. I say, what we believe we want children to learn will dictate how we go about teaching them. Part of the how is certainly something like ratio.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: The other thing you do not comment on specifically here is the new reality in our schools of the child care centre also being in the school. Of course, there are many things there in terms of the administration, the responsibilities, but questions arise there. The child care centre my daughter is in has a maximum eight-to-one ratio for the kids up to age six and then it moves to 12 to one. That could be happening in exactly the same school where, as you say, in the morning they go into junior kindergarten and they have got 25 kids with them. You do not make any comment at all about that new reality of the bringing together of these two things in terms of the support that the child care centre has to be for the half-day program, or in terms of the lack of coherence there.

Dr Eden: Again, if I can speak from my former cap rather than my position at the university, one of my responsibilities in York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board, where I was co-ordinator of programs, was to be very much involved in the implementation of the in-school child care facilities. We had many concerns of that nature, not just in terms of ratio and physical size. The physical size is legislated, as you will know, by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the day cares, but we do not have that, not to the same extent, in education and the issue of program need. In the point I am making here about continuity and consistency, if children are in one mould in their preschool and

then come into another mould for the other half day in JK and then possibly are in settings with baby-sitters where whole different sets of expectations are applied, I think it has serious implications for children.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This brings me to another problem. I mean, it reinforces your notion about the class size thing. Comsoc, thinking of itself as a welfare agency around child care, developed the standards in terms of custodial notions and did not develop any notions of curriculum that would be available. I guess the opposite could be said of the kindergartens. There is some sort of notion of curriculum, although I am a little vague, frankly, about what it is and how it is being applied across the province, but there has been nothing dealt with in the class size side of things.

I would like to look at the Queen's Park day care as an example. From your experience, I would just like to know what you think the difference is between the way that day is structured for a child and the use of creative play and a lot of the other pedagogical presumptions that are in your philosophical overview that happen in the child care at an eight-to-one ratio as compared with what is then happening in the school system.

It strikes me that for my son, for instance, a five-year-old in French immersion, his day care provides him with a very supportive kind of situation for what he is getting in his kindergarten class and in fact provides the same kind of stimulations as there are in the kindergarten, whether it is the trips which are tied into holistic notions about some of the goals that are set for the kids at that point or whether it is the use of water play and other kinds of play to help socialization. The goals seem to be identical, yet in the good day care there is a 12-to-one ratio or, in his case, less than that, and at the school, although it is less than the 25s we are talking about, it is substantially higher. I wonder if you can maybe comment on that.

Dr Eden: I think there is a whole contextual difference that is really difficult for me to perhaps describe to you in the time we have. Children in kindergartens in the school setting are part of the whole school community, or ought to be, and as such should be experiencing all of those other benefits of being in a school; ie, the partners in action types of things with the school librarian being very much involved with them, the use of gymnasiums and all of that kind of thing.

When you ask me how the day is different, again in my mind it really will depend not so

much on the setting as on the nature of the training of the person, and what they are offering the children. In the best of possible worlds one would think that in a kindergarten setting although our numbers are higher, we ought to be able to provide a richer context because of all of the other kinds of resources we have to offer children.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I wish I believed that were true. It would be nice if it were and that surely is what we are after. I could get into some discussion with you about the use the day care makes of the local library, the local gym and the local arena in terms of its program. But that is a different matter. That has very little to do with the kindergarten itself. It has everything to do with the fact that you put them into a larger grouping with other agencies and I think that is a useful thing.

But let's go to the training side of this because this fascinates me and I really want to learn an awful lot more about what the distinctions are. We had somebody here from early education and they gave us a program, the two-year program at Centennial College. I presume that it is a one-year program at a faculty of education for a person to be able to graduate and to end up in a kindergarten teaching placement; is that true?

Dr Eden: Most universities in the province have a degree program; in York's case, for example, with its concurrent program, it is training over a three-year period. That three-year period encompasses both the liberal arts program and the teacher training. They do placements in kindergarten, but they also do placements in primary and junior. As I mentioned in my paper, the present certification is a primary/junior certification.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But is it necessary to have three years to get that certification to be able to teach in grade 1 or kindergarten?

Dr Eden: I think what you are saying there is very much what I am sensitive about, when you talk about training for kindergarten teachers and say it does not matter that they have as much training as teachers in secondary schools, for example. I think that training for teachers of young children ought to be more rigorous, not less.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So do I.

Dr Eden: When you say one year I would really suggest, as I have here, that although there are some improvements to be made, I feel there needs to be much stronger measures taken to improve the quality of basic teacher training.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not think we are disagreeing on that. I am just trying to find out what the basic is at the moment. Is it possible for someone not to go through the York three-year program but just to go into a faculty of education this year and next year get hired by the Peel Board of Education to teach kindergarten?

Dr Eden: In the programs that the University of Toronto have and that I am involved with in York this year, the consecutive program, it is a one-year program most of our students have been hired and they can find themselves in kindergarten next year. It is a real dilemma because, as you well know, we are trying to respond to the teacher shortage and, as I say, when students are picked up in November without even their first marks in, the boards are feeling pretty desperate. I have some personal concerns, and I know that they are shared by my colleagues at York, for how we can add more things that would make it important that they have a better grounding in the early years.

One of the ways we are looking at that is through this in-service. One of the difficulties that I have identified over my long career is the problem that, once people are teachers, there is really no insistence other than pay at scale to ensure that everybody does go on to further specialization.

I have been involved in in-service programs teaching primary/junior specialist courses with the ministry and with universities for many, many years. We have a tremendous number of teachers doing that. But a teacher who chooses not to at this point in time is still allowed to. So what we are looking at are a number of options where, if after this one-year training they find themselves in teaching, what do we do to support their continued journey of growth? I think it has to be that.

It is some time since I read Connelly's report on the recommendations for changing teacher education, so I do not remember all the specifics, but the internship idea and all of those things could be looked at. I do not think that if we had a five-year training program we could still be able to prepare people.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is why I think that the notion of in-service training is something we have to deal with separately.

The Chair: Could I deal with a supplementary along that line just to clarify it more for the committee? I want to make sure it is clear. I think Mr Johnston's question was, if you did not go to York specifically, or McArthur College, or Auldhouse or wherever, if you did not go to those

universities after getting a bachelor of arts degree, could you go into a one-year college of education certification to get your B Ed?

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Dr Eden: At this point, yes. The University of Toronto has that kind of program; York does, a number of universities do.

The Chair: If you have those numbers, what proportion of York graduates would be going through the faculty of education at York and what proportion would not be from York but from some other university?

Dr Eden: I am sorry, I do not know that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The concurrent programs for an undergraduate are a very small proportion of the overall—about 4,000 grads per year capacity that is approximately there in the system.

Dr Eden: We have 400 only in the consecutive program this year. Apparently there were over 4,000 applications for 400 positions for this program. If I might just make one quick comment about that, being quite involved in it this year, it is a very rich program. Many of our students have been involved. We have some who have ECE training, who have gone on to get their degree and now are getting teacher certification. We have several students, probably four or five just in my site alone in Scarborough, who are teaching in schools on letters of permission, who have some teaching background. We have people who were in professional theatre, a wide range of background experiences. So they come with a lot that you could not give them in any graduate program, a lot of real-life experiences, which are important too.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Marks are used far too much, but we will not get into that in terms of the problems that I have had with faculties. But what strikes me—forget the in-service at the moment, because that is of secondary importance for us to deal with—is we are talking now about a person entering our system, which is now putting a huge expectation on junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten out there, and being able, with one year's work, not necessarily with any related background at all although hopefully, more and more, the faculties are taking that into consideration. At the same time we have early childhood education programs which take two years to undergo, which seem to provide a fairly broad range of developmental expectation in terms of the numbers of courses and the various semesters that they have in terms of understanding what is going on with kids; a huge amount of practicum

in comparison again with what I imagine is at the faculties. Yet those people have no recognition within our education system at all.

I understand what you are saying about not wanting to diminish the academic prerequisites for hiring people in teaching. I can see how, if we give too much credit to the ECE types, that could be seen to be watering down, I suppose, the levels. But in the reality of it all for a moment, I would really like to hear from you what the gains are and what the losses are for someone who has taken this course at Centennial, for which we have been given an outline, first for two years, versus somebody who has gone through the Toronto faculty's program. For instance, how many hours of practicum would be involved in that one-year course?

Dr Eden: I cannot tell you the total hours; I should know, because I am not supervising and they are imprinted on my brain. But our students are out two days a week in practicums, and then they are in course work two days a week. In addition to that they have significant blocks of time—two- and three-week blocks of time. They are also coming into their course work in August. At York we have an extended year for these students in order to get any kind of academic stuff that they also have to know.

I do not want to give you the impression that I do not value programs such as Centennial's. It is like any other program or any other endeavour, however. Centennial may not be necessarily representative of the full picture. People can be getting training that is not—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just as York is not the example for the majority at the moment. The example we were given, just to be specific, has between 500 and 1,000 hours of practicum. It does not strike me, from what you are saying, that the faculty could be producing anything close to that in a one-year placement.

Dr Eden: I guess we are into what maybe you would call philosophic but to me it is a very crucial issue—the dialectic, the combination of the understandings; that is, theory and practice. In order to have that amount of practicum in, when do people come together to discuss, to internalize, to interpret and all of that? I am not questioning the Centennial model, please, but I am saying from a personal point of view, to be a teacher and not a technician, one must have that understanding of how children learn, of what curriculum is. We have come a long way in teaching from the days when I started where I would do a workshop with teachers and say, "Oh, don't give me theory; give me some little

handout and I am fine." Teachers are much more sophisticated now and I find it quite reassuring because they must be the thinkers. They have to be thinkers, not just doers.

I am smiling because yesterday, when I was at York, one of my friends there showed me a little book published in 1895 here in Toronto on education. I am sorry I cannot remember who published it, but the page I opened to was an ad for a publication that says, "Teachers do," and it gives a list of all the little how-to's they would have, and in big letters at the bottom it says, "and no theory added." So, that whole notion that all you need to do is get in there and be with children. I said in the early part of my presentation, and I genuinely say that, that what I really know in here and in here I know from children, but the only way that I could conceptualize that was through my studies and to be able to make the generalizations that make me a professional.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I have no difficulty at all with that and think that that is a very important component. In the two-year program they have their 200 hours of developmental theory taught. I wonder how that relates to what goes on in the faculty.

Dr. Eden: Again, you must appreciate that in preparing for this I had one week in a very busy schedule. I did not have time to pull together that kind of numerical data for you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you could get us the information, that would be fine. I just thought that, because of your experience, you might have it. For instance, they have four courses on early childhood curriculum that they teach and I would be interested to know how that compares with the number of curriculum courses that are taught.

Dr. Eden: I do not really want to do a comparison here, and I realize that is what you want me to do, because I think there are just too many factors: what kinds of theories? This could be of the faculty of education, it could be of the ECE. What I want to say in my presentation, what I think I have tried to say as clearly as I know how, is indeed we value ECE persons. I do a great deal of work. I am doing a paper right now for the Manitoba Early Childhood Education Association journal. I am the keynote speaker at a large early childhood conference in Vancouver in May. I have a very high regard for ECE-trained people. What I am saying in my paper is that we should find ways of recognizing their value; facilitate, however we need to, their getting to brief programs which we consider to be essential for all teaching, and therefore, it seems

to me, ought to encompass kindergarten. If the people do not choose to do that, we recognize through other differentiated staffing, or however we do it, their vital role in kindergartens.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think most of us agree with that but I think the difficulty is at the moment it has been mostly rhetorical, frankly. My frustration, I hope you will appreciate, is that it is very hard to get a handle on just what—there is a lot of rhetorical talk about the difference between the education someone gets at the faculty of education versus what an ECE person gets and that is one of the reasons there is no credit given for ECE, except for Ryerson and one other example, which I cannot remember off the top of my head. But the reality is something we as a committee need to get our hands on.

What I would like to get from you is in fact a breakdown of the course expectations in hours that are at the university. What is the curriculum? I am capable of reading what the various theories are that are being proposed. But I am going to get that from Centennial and I want it from the faculties because I think, frankly, that the differences in education around ECE and the developmental concepts are not that great at this point and there is an awful lot of artificial differentiation being made.

Although it may seem like the only thing we can do is talk about giving some kind of standing for recognition of some of the courses, I am beginning to think that maybe, if the differences are not that extreme and people can demonstrate competency as was attempted to be defined for us yesterday, we have to look at a little bit of grandparenting here as well, not just the notion that you start off people at a lower level as a sort of second tier within the school system and the second-class connotations that could come from that. In fact, we may have to do a bit of grandparenting for people with ECE if we really want people with good expertise in junior kindergarten. Anyway, we do not have to be too argumentative.

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The Chair: Piaget is still Piaget, no matter what course you are in. Dianne?

Ms Poole: Actually, Richard has covered a number of the questions I wanted to ask. But I wondered if you might clarify for me near the end, when you were talking about different methods of preparation for ECE in the faculty and you said that a more positive approach might be to consider differentiating staffing models which recognize the value of the ECE-trained professionals through advanced standing, but

permit a strengthening of kindergarten, rather than a weakening. By giving credit through advanced standing, would you be referring to giving credit in a university setting for ECE courses? Is that what you had in mind?

Dr Eden: Again, this is something that I speak for from York University, not from all of the deans in faculties of education, because with the short notice we have had for this that was not possible. But, yes, we in fact started discussions over a year ago. Before I came on full-time staff at York I was part of a committee looking at some ways of trying to bring the two groups together, recognizing the uniqueness of the ECE and the uniqueness of the kindergarten teacher and trying to bring those together in some kinds of ways. It is still at the brainstorming level. We have looked at things like courses that could be in common, recognition for their ECE training courses and that sort of thing.

Ms Poole: So this is what you have had in mind then, something along—some credit?

Dr Eden: Yes, of course.

Ms Poole: Where the course outlines, the curriculum, would be similar.

Dr Eden: And in my mind I do not think you can separate that from the other statements I have made here about the need to improve and to add components to basic teacher training that address the early years. This may seem irrelevant to you, but in my mind it is very important, the business of people in leadership roles. In the province of Ontario right now you can become a principal, a supervisory officer and never have taken any courses related to young children and I think that that is—

Ms Poole: So you really see your reform going far broader than just comparing the ECE and the faculty, but really looking at the end product?

Dr Eden: That is right. We are looking at the early years. But again, however, my point in doing this presentation was to say you cannot do that until we get our house in order, until we know what it is we want for our young children. That is a collective thing.

Ms Poole: Do you see a willingness within the faculties to address this problem?

Dr Eden: Very much. Certainly, as I say, at our faculty because we started discussions quite some time ago. For example, I teach a course on Monday nights, a primary specialist course on Monday nights, and I have a woman in that course who is an ECE-trained person working in an ECE centre who is taking her courses with me. She cannot go on to get a teaching certificate at

this point and I think that that is a real loss to us. I have lobbied on behalf of many ECE people to get into faculties. What we do not have the mechanism to do right now is recognize what they have. I think Mr Johnston's point is well made when he said there is so much confusion about the kinds of training. It is not a universal in either ECE or education. So we need to look at that.

Ms Poole: It is good to hear that kind of reconciliation and willingness to do reconciliation is going on. I see it as very similar in a way to what the certified general accountants want to do as opposed to the chartered accountants and the fact that one is very heavily on the practical experience while the other has more of an academic bent, and yet they have the same goals and much of the same instruction. I see a parallel to the faculties of education and the ECE. I guess I think it is very important that not be lost.

Mrs O'Neill: Dr Eden, I am really trying to resist getting into this fray because I think it is something very difficult and my colleague tells me to resist. All I would say is that I am very happy that real people are into the discussion, because I do not think any examination of curriculum or practicum documents, putting them together on a table and examining them, will give us appreciation.

Certainly, the level of discussion that goes on in a classroom, the type of assignment and the way in which it is evaluated, are all really very important. From my limited experience, I really do feel that the faculties have a different breadth of request and demand of their students than do the community colleges. I try to say that with as much respect as I can, since I was supported by a community college person for a long time in my life and still live with him quite happily.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are not trying to throw any wrench into the home scene.

Ms Poole: What does your husband think of this?

Mrs O'Neill: We have debates. Having been in a faculty of education myself and having just had one of my children there, I do think it is, as you try to suggest, in preparation for an education career at this moment, a much broader base and more highly focused to a task.

That being said, may I go to your paper. I wonder if you can just say a little more about what I consider is a very serious problem: the mental health of young children. I am very, very disturbed to read of areas—and I think they are still south of the border but no doubt we have

some here—where six- and seven-year-olds contemplate suicide. I do know that one of the boards in my area does have a mental health worker in certain schools and that is sometimes criticized as a frill. I do not consider it so. It is expensive.

Could you tell us a bit about how that is tested or is this just something you are observing as a general observation you make as you go about. Do we have some statistics to tell us what we are dealing with here and can you give us some examples of how maybe some people are dealing with it well?

Dr Eden: The whole issue of mental health of young children is one people do not want to talk about. We want to keep the romantic notion of all these cute little kids running around with nice pretty dresses and all of that stuff. There are a lot of statistics out there. Again, as I say, I apologize, but in the short time that I had to prepare this, I had to really go with what I had in hand.

One of the people here in Toronto who has done a great deal of work with mental health issues in young children is Dr Otto Weininger at OISE, who was my thesis adviser on my study of play. In much of the work that he has done looking at very young children in his own private practice, he contends that children, at a very early age, are quite capable of contemplating suicide. That notion has not been one that, again, we want to deal with as adults.

From my personal experience in visiting classrooms, I do seem to see an increasing number of children—and it demonstrates itself in behaviour—whose behaviour is almost out of control at four and five years of age; children who are excessively aggressive; children who do not know how to play. The consequences of that on learning, again, have been documented. If a child is really disturbed, just as we are as adults—if we are really upset, even as adults; if we have had a fight with our spouse in the morning or our kids are driving us crazy today, or whatever it is, we cannot concentrate.

We cannot expect very young children to be able to concentrate, so it has implications for the cognitive development in terms of their ability to attend and focus on tasks and that sort of stuff. It has implications through play for socialization. Children who are unable to form relationships with other children at an early age are likely, down the road, to have a great deal of difficulty forming adult relationships.

So the mental health issues are real. I am sure you are aware of the project *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*, which is triple-funded by the

Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. I was invited to serve on that initial committee that looked at the project. Unfortunately, other commitments took my time. But I have the report in hand now and I am looking at that.

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One of the things they are trying to do, if some of you are not familiar with that, is look at mental health issues. Primarily, that is the mandate of that group. They want first of all to do some research to find out to what extent this is a real problem in Canada and what kinds of things can be done.

The other study that I think of was done through the Institute for Child Study with Dr Andy Beimiller and Merle Richards from Brock University. They did a project in about 1983-84 called *Project Thrive*, where as part of a longitudinal study they looked at children who have had difficulties in kindergarten, what was happening by grade 2 and if there were any improvements. The picture was quite bleak. In other words, kids who were having difficulty in kindergarten were worse by the time they got to grade 2 and grade 3.

Mrs O'Neill: I guess that is what I wanted to ask you, whether you thought there were interventions that you could point to, but my readings are the same as yours, that we have not really come to grips with it.

Dr Eden: My own speculation is that if we addressed the improvement of programming and forgot whether we are talking about an ECE setting or a school setting, we could make some inroads. I think a lot of times the quality of the program certainly has a lot to do with the behavioural stuff. Now, how we as educators take on the role or the burden, if we might say it that way, of offsetting factors over which we have no control, I do not know.

An article that I read, and I am sorry I cannot remember who it is by, was looking at links between the fact that children in day care settings in very early ages, where there is a rapid turnover in care givers, are failing to establish bonding and relationships and it is showing up as they mature. That makes sense. Little children need the security of somebody they can count on and if every few months there is somebody else's new face there it becomes very difficult.

So those are factors. I do not know in education. I guess what I would say to teachers is that we get our house in order, we do the best things we know how to do as teachers. I think it

has a very strong social element, much stronger than we used to think education was about.

Mrs O'Neill: Thanks very much for trying.

Mr Neumann: I have several questions. In the first one I am going to refer to your comments in your paper where you said, "The preparation of teachers for ECE and for kindergarten have fundamentally different orientations." Then, in the next sentence, you go on, "Teacher education in the province is committed to a broad-based, liberal arts education, which is in harmony with the vision of a holistic curriculum." But having stated that one is fundamentally different from the other, you do not state what the orientation of the other is.

Dr Eden: My focus in this paper is education.

Mr Neumann: You made the statement that they are fundamentally different; therefore, you must have a perception of what the other is. You have stated clearly what the teacher end of it is. What is the orientation of the other?

Dr Eden: Far more on nurturing and care. It is a training which, in my view, as a mandate, ought to be that, ought to be care. The whole connotation of preschool has been care. I am not saying it is not changing, but that notion of care and nurturing and that kind of an environment is the primary focus, rather than, as I have suggested here—

Mr Neumann: Are you saying that teaching does not go on in a day care centre?

Dr Eden: No, I did not say that. I think there is lots of teaching, but if you read my paper you will see that I tend to turn that always around and look at how children learn, rather than what we teach. I think the notion of teaching has come way back from our ideas of pouring something into the empty vessels and the teacher imparts to children. The notion of supporting learning is a much a more positive one and there is a great deal of learning going on in preschools. There is no question about that.

Mr Neumann: I understand all that. I am trying to more clearly understand what you meant by a fundamentally different orientation.

Dr Eden: The function of preschool in our society is a different role than school. In that sense, they have fundamentally different mandates. If we follow that through, then we look at the whole notion, as I said earlier, of what is the role of day care in our society? What is it by tradition we have come to see? And the focus there is much more on care.

Children are learning in any situation. Children are learning in their homes. I would not

want to suggest that I do not think they are learning.

Mr Neumann: You were not talking about what goes on in a kindergarten and what goes on in a day care centre. You were talking about preparation of the staff for the two areas being fundamentally different.

Dr Eden: Yes.

Mr Neumann: The orientation.

Dr Eden: Yes, but the orientation in the ECE training is towards that function as care givers.

Mr Neumann: Okay. Having stated that they are fundamentally different, what do they have in common?

Dr Eden: I think I have said that in the paper also. Along with parents, child care people, preschool people are dedicated to trying to do the best for children and to provide quality experiences.

Mr Neumann: I am going to make reference to another part of the paper now.

Dr Eden: Okay.

Mr Neumann: You made reference to a study that you did about—

Dr Eden: Yes. Children's play.

Mr Neumann:—freedom to play and some very positive things came out of that. It demonstrated "the development of skill in problem solving, decision making, planning, negotiation, collaboration, conflict resolution and communication." I have seen that myself. I have seen children who can learn a great deal when left to themselves.

I am not a professional in the sense that you are in training teachers, but my observation is that, yes, there are children who have it all together, who come from the proper background, who can learn all of these things if interference is taken away and they are left to play. But there are also the children with special needs who need close direction and a much more structured setting in order to learn. Would you not agree?

Dr Eden: What you are saying is interesting. Play is the most structured of activities when we understand it; it has its own structures. We often made the assumption that the child with special needs has to be told and has to be directed. I would use the word "control."

You will notice that I used the phrase "inappropriate intervention," because there are positive interventions that support children getting the most out of play. In my studies of children's play I look at several things, the first being what I call the architect and the playscape.

That is, the kinds of materials we provide, the setting, the space, all of those things.

This is why, while Mr Johnston asked the question about ratio, he did not ask about space. But if you would ask me, I would tell you our kindergartens are far too small because space has a profound influence on the quality of play. So, there is an important intervention role, the same as with parents. If a parent provides children with a lot of these commercial toys that they pay big bucks for at Christmas time, with batteries, whistles, things that pop and so on; that do not generate imagination, they are not enhancing the play the way they could with old-fashioned things like blocks and dollies and stuff. So there is that thing.

There is the other function of play partner. In order to really look at that, you have to get into the stuff on drama, because it is a form of drama and how teachers and adults can support children through being play partners.

Mr Neumann: I agree with all of that, but I am talking about children with special needs, the hyperactive child, the attention-deficit child. Are you telling me that those kinds of children do not need more structure and direction?

Dr Eden: I would not say that they do not need more, but I would be careful of the kind, and that is in terms of the kind of control that we impose. One of the things we tend to do with children who have behavioural difficulties, for example, is to impose external controls and not give the children opportunities to ever develop internal controls, which is the primary purpose of our endeavour.

So, yes, I think they do need more support and they need environments where there are less numbers of children with whom to interact, all of those things. One of the children who was in that classroom in the year that I did my study was sufficiently disturbed to be going every day to Blue Hills, which is the preschool centre in York region for children with serious problems.

And yet you could watch 100 hours of video on my tape and never pick that boy out because of the ways the teacher was able to support him and the other children. And that was in a very busy classroom.

So yes, they do need additional support. That is why this better beginnings is such an important project, because we need to look at how we can support those children. It is very important, but I do not think it is by imposing and directing and controlling to the extent that they do not have the opportunity to play.

1150

Mr Neumann: I was not suggesting that they not have the opportunity to play. At one time there was quite a trend in Ontario schools to open-concept classroom and my limited observation of that level and experience as a parent, there are certain kinds of children with certain difficulties who just simply cannot learn as well in that concept. They need a more structured, more directed environment in order to learn the basics, reading, writing, and arithmetic, which then allows them to proceed. If they do not, if they are not able to learn, they develop a very poor self-image—

Dr Eden: Of course they do.

Mr Neumann: —and ask themselves, “Why are these other kids advancing and I am not?” I am very concerned about the self-image.

Dr Eden: So am I.

Mr Neumann: From your professional knowledge are there any studies that have been done that would determine whether the child who is attention-deficit, who is hyperactive, who has these difficulties, learns better or not as well in a structured versus an open-concept system?

Dr. Eden: That is another whole issue. If you are talking about play, or if you are talking about structured versus open programs, that is another whole issue. It really is and I do not know how much you want me to continue.

The Chair: Just satisfy the questioner and try to get where their answers are—

Dr Eden: In terms of open versus structured classrooms, there is a ton of research—you must know that—out of the United States. If you think about young children, the spate of research you would look at would be the things from Operation Headstart and Project Follow Through, which they started in the late 1960s with the notion that by direct intervention they could turn around, if you will, the consequences of poverty and all those side effects, which often include children who have the kinds of behaviour that you have described.

The research over the 1970s that followed it up was very inconclusive, in part because the kinds of methodologies that they used to look at that were not sufficiently flexible to look at qualitative differences and you have to look at qualitative differences. In other words, if I give them all a test and see that they recognize their numerals, that does not tell me anything about whether the program was open or what it does for their self-concept. It simply tells me how many

kids recognize their numerals. So, there were methodology problems.

There were also problems there in terms of how they defined open and closed programs. So, in that research, for all of the research that was done on that, there was not a lot of conclusive evidence. You will be familiar with the Ypsilanti work, I am sure, because it was documented. A number of people cite that. Radwanski cites that as well, so he has attempted to do some studies and he would strongly argue that, yes, there is a significant difference between children who are in a controlling, directed environment versus children who are given the opportunities to be active learners.

I think that it is not even as simple as saying, "Is there a piece of research I can cite and say, 'Yes, I am right and you are wrong.'" It is not that. It is a balance of all of those things. And one of the things I find really distressing is always that it has got to be one or the other. It does not have to be one or the other.

A good classroom, in my view—I am using right now a lot of work by Jack Miller from OISE, who describes different models of curriculum design and he talks about the difference between transmission and transaction and transformation. Transmission is the old rote learning where we memorized our number facts. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recently came out with a report in which they say, having looked at mathematics in the United States, the predominant amount of time is spent on skills that can be purchased for \$7.35 at the local computer store, ie, a calculator, and that the thinking skills are not being addressed. So there are a whole lot of other things that are touching on and helping us to get a clearer conceptual notion.

I say in my paper that we need a new concept of teaching and education. We need to be looking at all these things and bringing them together. It is not just, "Well, I'll let the kids run free and throw basketballs around in the classroom and stand on their ear in the corner if that's what they feel like doing." That is not, in my book, what active learning is. Kids can be physically active but not be active learners. One of the most strongly negative reports I ever did was on open area in the early 1970s and yet I am a very strong advocate of open education. I do not know if that helps.

Mr Neumann: Yes. I think there have to be different approaches as well. I am very much in favour of active learning. My question related to whether or not the more sort of free-play

approach was appropriate for the child who has trouble focusing and directing his attention to the task at hand.

Dr Eden: Children have trouble focusing, for the most part, when what they are asked to do has no meaning for them. That is not a motherhood statement. You will know, probably, that in the York region separate, where I come from, we had one of the highest numbers of young children mainstreamed in kindergarten of anywhere. So I was quite involved over the last 10 years with children who had quite serious exceptionalities and I have seen little children with a great deal of intensity and absorption involved in their play. To me, the whole thing of attention—unless you are talking about pathological, and that is whole different thing.

Mr Neumann: That is exactly what I am talking about. The inability to focus or learn at the same level as other students can come from a variety of different causes, some of which are pathological and some of which are physical.

Dr Eden: But there is also a great power if the child is involved in something that is meaningful to the child, even in the most distractible children. But please do not interpret what I am saying as, "No child ever needs...." I do not make those kinds of statements. I wish it were sometimes that simple; it never is. And when you ask me to make the kind of cut-and-dried statement, "This child needs this," I cannot do that and I do not choose to do it as a professional because I think that in any of these situations you have to be looking—and that is why the teacher training component is so important. You cannot presume that people, because they have even 1,000 hours of child development courses, are going to be able to predict all of this or know all of it. We have to have supports on an ongoing basis.

Mr Neumann: Do the parents have the support they need to make sure that their child has the education the child needs?

Dr Eden: Again, because of the limited time—I was told I had 20 minutes to present this—I did not go into parent education, but I have been very involved in parent education and I do not think that they do. That is, again, why I said in my paper that teachers and parents share the need for a clear understanding of what constitutes quality early education. Parents do not have that embedded and that again would be, in my view, those links with home.

I think we are doing a far better job than we were when I started teaching. Parents are far

more welcome to most schools. I know there are individual schools where parents will phone me and say, "You know, I'm afraid to go in there." That happens in any situation, but I think we are doing a far better job. I think we are doing a better job in understanding that it is not just about, "I'm the expert and you are not, parent, and I'm going to tell you how to teach and raise your little kid." It is about this dialogue and that partnership and I think we are doing a much better job.

Mr Neumann: I was thinking in particular of the parents of children with special needs. Are they getting the supports they need to help them through the decision-making process to ensure that the child is placed in the proper setting?

Dr Eden: Again I can only speak to that from a personal perspective. I think we have come a long, long way since the introduction of the mainstreaming bill in Ontario. In my board, the York region separate, where I have come from, we started way back in 1980 what we called an early facilitation committee, which was a way of easing children into kindergarten—JK, because we had junior kindergarten—who had severe exceptionalities. Part of that process was a very strong link with the families. We would go to wherever the child was—it was part and parcel of the special education curriculum—visit the homes and talk with parents. We did invest a great deal of time. Not every parent was always happy with what we did, but given the resources we had we really tried to address that. I think that many boards are attempting to.

1200

Again, we get very impatient with education and every time we pick up the paper there is some other criticism of something we have not just done the way we ought to. But it is not that many years ago when school really was thought to be a very distinct and separate domain and parents did not have much say or right; or as teachers you will notice from your own experience, some of you as parents or as students, that the teacher was right. So if the teacher said this the parent had better pay attention. We have gone away from that mentality, thank goodness, for the most part.

The Chair: Thank you. Just two short questions in summation: I guess a comment to say that I am pleased that you are talking to early childhood people because it seems to me that sometimes we get into these theories of thinkers rather than doers and I am concerned that—there are ways. I always applaud people's initiatives who beat the system and who make very good teachers by beating the system—that is, going to

other jurisdictions or working it out with, say, Ryerson or other places and still becoming very good teachers in spite of their lack of thoughtful process, or it is claimed. I am concerned about that kind of drawing in our community college and university systems and I think that it is somewhat difficult when a number of people, unbeknownst to some of the authorities, are getting through the system and working it out. Maybe they are learning to be thinkers rather than doers but I appreciate your comments.

The one concern I had was, you had mentioned in your paper about the number of immigrants who settle in Ontario. Following that, the kinds of entry by people who are fully qualified—have even post-graduate degrees—of some immigrants who cannot get into teachers' colleges because their undergraduate degrees are not—even if they have been accepted for graduate school and passed—they did not do their undergraduate degree in an approved institution, even though that school—recognized in every way, shape or form and has a post-graduate degree, he cannot get into teachers' college.

I am concerned that perhaps it is perceived by some of the immigrant groups that this is a form of discrimination, particularly when someone from middle-class Ontario goes to the same university graduate school and, lo and behold, gets into teachers' college. I do not know if you want to comment on that. It goes further than what you had stated here, but I am very much concerned that the faculties of education have to look at that aspect.

Dr Eden: The importance of having role models of the same ethnic background is a very important one. One of the schools that I do my observations in, the student's practicum, is a Metro separate school where I know it has been a major issue. The vice-principal happens to be from a visible minority and I have talked a lot about that.

York University is attempting in its consecutive program to give some priority to visible minorities. We have a number of students—probably not nearly enough and we would all agree with that, because we also want you to be able to do the job. It would be an insult to visible minorities to say, "Because you are a visible minority, we are going to take you." We want them to be able to do a good job.

But there certainly is a conscious effort on the part of York's faculty, and particularly with the youth program, to allow people who are precisely in that position, who already have a degree from another university, who have possibly work

experience and who are trying to get into education. So there is certainly the recognition of that as a problem.

The Chair: I just hope that someone who would be accepted at Arizona State University, let's say, or the University of Michigan in a post-graduate program, have a master of arts, complete that program, who come from one of our immigrant countries that are coming to Ontario—I have such a case in my riding involving two teachers; one gets into teacher's college and the excuse was that his undergrad degree was not accepted, yet the other person who went to school in Ontario and went to Arizona state got accepted.

I find that difficult and I think the minority feels it is a discrimination issue. I just hope that is addressed generally throughout the colleges of education because I think it is being used there, when in fact they are the same program and graduated with the same marks and all of that stuff. It is a little difficult for some of those folks to agree, and I hope you take that back because I know you are concerned about it and I appreciate that.

Dr Eden: I surely will, and you understand the competition is fierce. One of my very favourite

young people—I have been writing recommendations, this will be my third year, to York University and she is a wonderful person, ought to be there, would make a wonderful contribution and I am still—

The Chair: Still plugging.

Dr Eden: I am still plugging. But certainly I know that ??Dean Effort is very committed to trying to support visible minorities.

The Chair: On behalf of the committee, I very much appreciate your excellent presentation. Some of us are teachers in our former lives and I think we understand sometimes—but we hope you did not feel too hard done by, I think the questioning was an hour long and I very much appreciate your coming before the committee.

Dr Eden: I am sorry I did not have more answers to some of your questions but you would need to give me longer lead time.

The Chair: We appreciate that. It was our difficulty too when the House allows us to sit and that is why we were having some difficulty, but we promise for the next one, it will be much longer.

The committee recessed at 1207.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1417 in committee room 1.

The Chair: I would like to call the session to order.

Before Linda comes up, it occurred to me to review tomorrow afternoon because there had been some discussion of how we wanted to deal with going to Ryerson.

Mrs O'Neill: Oh, that is tomorrow.

The Chair: I know we kind of left it either at walking—if you read Hansard on this whole debate, it is a sight to behold because everybody is talking about lung power and health and all of that stuff—we are leaving it up to the weather, which was a little different—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Stress test.

The Chair: —stress test in a different manner, but I just wanted to remind you that tomorrow the afternoon session will be at Ryerson.

I think we should just make sure whether we want to make arrangements to ride, whether we want to get out on our own and meet there or whatever we want to do and maybe Tannis could review it. We were just going to get cabs and go over, or we were going to walk. We can review that at tomorrow's session because we will know what the weather is like tomorrow, perhaps, but that opportunity does exist. So we will deal with that tomorrow morning and then be ready for tomorrow afternoon.

Mrs O'Neill: I would like to tie it down just a bit more. I have lunch set up with somebody tomorrow. Are you talking about departing at 1:30, no matter how we leave? And where is the 1:30 meeting point? I just would like not to wait. I may have to change the lunchtime depending on where we are departing from.

The Chair: If you wanted to ride over, I think the idea was to get there by 2 pm and to allow half an hour for travel time. I have a luncheon outside the area too.

Mr Neumann: How long does it take to walk there?

The Chair: It is about a 20-minute walk. We could meet at the front entrance at 1:30 if you wanted to ride.

Mrs O'Neill: If you want to walk, are we going to meet at the front entrance? I do not really know where Ryerson is, but I am prepared to look it up on a map.

The Chair: Tomorrow morning Tannis will bring all the instructions and we will deliberate on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is one block east of Yonge.

Mrs O'Neill: Yonge and Gerrard.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Yonge and Gerrard; I know where that is.

The Chair: We will bring all of that information for you first thing tomorrow morning before we start the session.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But you need to know where the building is.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As you know, university campuses are always set up as IQ tests for the students to see whether they deserve to be there or not.

The Chair: Yes. You got accepted into the program; now find the building.

Ms Poole: That is why you went to a small university—besides the fact that your mother was the registrar.

The Chair: Okay. We will deal with that more formally tomorrow morning.

Mrs O'Neill: The front door at 1:30 is basically what we should go on.

The Chair: That is right. But if you have other arrangements for lunch then you may want to just get there at two. We will decide who is coming tomorrow because we will know who is on deck tomorrow.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you going to write down the name of the building we are going to.

The Chair: Yes. We are going to do all of that tomorrow morning. I promise. No problem.

Mr Furlong: Stick with me.

The Chair: Linda Siegel, professor of special education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, welcome to the committee. As we normally do, we will turn the floor over to you as you are making the presentation.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Dr Siegel: I was really delighted to see that the committee is interested in these sorts of issues. What I have done is prepare some remarks

addressed to the questions that were raised in the letter to me, but I certainly would be glad to have questions at any time during the presentation—it is going to be a brief presentation—and allow for questions afterwards, but during, too.

The Chair: We would like you to make your presentation and allow for questions. It just allows us to write, pay attention and not get distracted.

Dr Siegel: Okay.

One of the issues that seems to be discussed now and certainly is part of the discussions of the committee is the age of entry into formal schooling, what we know about this, how it is decided and the whole issue of the transition from the more informal preschool experience of the child to the more formal school experience.

One of the concepts, I think, as you are all aware, that has been around in education and governed a lot of our decisions about education, is this concept of readiness, that the child is at a certain age ready to engage in activities, be it reading, spelling, arithmetic or formal schooling in some way, usually the kind of regimentation that is part of formal schooling.

I think this concept of readiness is receiving less and less support in the actual empirical work that we do. We know now that there is not any magic age where a child all of a sudden is ready to learn to read, that the development of all of these skills—I will use reading as an example—is a very gradual process and builds on other skills. There is not only one point in time when a child is ready for school.

We also know that this concept of general readiness or overall level is really not a very useful concept, that there are a whole lot of areas of functioning that mature at different rates in different children. Some children are advanced in their language development but somewhat behind in their motor development, or advanced in their social development but not so advanced in their language development. There are all of these different areas that are developing simultaneously in the child and the concept of an overall level is not too useful, so that arbitrary decisions about schooling and entry into formal schooling based on this concept of readiness and some sort of magic level really are not terribly useful.

We know something about the maturation or the development of different functions, and I would like to talk a little bit about language functioning, which I think is really one of the most critical functions in terms of schooling and in particular, reading instruction, which has been

the focus of a lot of attention. At what point do you start reading instruction?

What I would like to point out is that reading and the other work that is done in formal schooling is based very much on language and the development of the child's language. A lot of the development of the child's language is determined by the development of the brain and the nervous system, which goes on according to a time course. Nobody would attempt, for example, to teach a four-month-old baby to talk. That would be a useless enterprise because the nervous system is not ready.

The very early development of language, and the same thing is true of reading skills, is very much dependent on the level of maturation. However, the particular environment the child is exposed to does make a great deal of difference also, so that we need a combination of these two points of view, the specific experience and the maturation of the child, in considering what the child's development is, in particular in terms of the child's development in the areas of reading and language. The same thing would be true in other areas too in terms of how we should structure the instruction for the child, and the best guide we can use is the child.

Children are very good at letting us know how to respond to them, how to stimulate them and what sort of educational experiences to provide them with. For example, in the area of language development there have been a number of studies of the way parents talk to children, and across different languages and different cultures they have developed the concept which is called *motherese*. That is probably a sexist term, but actually mothers do talk to children more than fathers do; it probably should be called *parentese*, but the particular jargon word is "*motherese*."

Parents in different cultures with different languages are very sensitive to the child's language level and use a particular kind of language to talk to the child, which is basically a slight expansion of what the child says. If the child says something like, "Go car," the mother says, "Oh, you want to go in the car." This conversation has a particular structure to it and it very much mirrors the child's language. Nobody has taught parents how to talk to children, but what the parents are doing is responding to the child. I think that is the same philosophy we need to follow in education, to be aware of how the child is functioning and then to structure the environment in such a way that we are responsive to the child.

That is what I am going to say about those particular issues. We can discuss them in more detail if you have some questions.

Another issue that was raised is the transition from the more informal schooling, preschools, to the more formal schooling. Actually, the institution of kindergarten is a very good way of providing this transition and in practice it really is what it does. So the kindergarten programs, both junior and senior kindergartens, as I have observed them, particularly senior kindergarten, are a transition from the more or less free play with relatively little structure to a more structured environment where the children sometimes have to stand in line or sometimes sit still for longer periods than they have to do in a typical preschool setting. So the transition is built into the system and I think that in fact works very, very well. I do not particularly see any need to make any changes in that aspect of the system.

1430

There is an area of the education of young children in which I think we need to see some really very significant changes, and that is the whole idea of the early identification of children with difficulties of one sort or another, be they in the language, motor or social areas. I think all of you are aware of the tremendously high dropout rate in schools. In my experience most of these school dropouts are people who have learning problems of one sort or another that have not been detected. In terms of the research and my experience, teachers of young children are very good at picking up potential problems. If we really want to do something for the educational system, we should be paying attention to these difficulties early.

For example, if a child is significantly slow in learning language or if a child is not picking up reading skills towards the end of grade 1 after several months eight or nine months of instruction in reading, that is a danger signal. What we need to be doing is to pick up these problems early and start remediation for them much earlier.

What happens in the school system now is that often these problems are ignored. There is again the intrusion of this concept of readiness, that all children will develop at a different rate, that all of a sudden they are ready and that the reason children are not learning is that they are not ready. That is really a disservice to children, because I see a lot of individuals with serious reading problems, who have had these reading problems from the time they were in grade 1 and often, because for a variety of reasons nothing is

done about them, these are the people who end up dropping out of school. But the social consequences may be even more serious.

I have done some work with Covenant House, which is a drop in centre for street kids in downtown Toronto, and we have looked at the incidence of learning disabilities in these individuals. By the way, all of them have had at least a grade 10 education. The incidence of learning disabilities in this group is 87 per cent. If we had paid attention to their learning disabilities early in the game and not just said, "They'll grow out of it," "They're lazy;" "They are not trying hard enough," or "They have social problems that are preventing them from learning," we would have prevented most of them from being on the street. They have other problems besides their learning disabilities, and we really do not have the time to go into that now, but the fact is that most of these people were not helped at the time they should have been. I do not have to tell you what the cost to society is of not recognizing these problems early.

The unfortunate trend I see in education is to just assume that these problems will take care of themselves. I think that is a very dangerous attitude, but I think the attention to these problems can start even at the preschool level and often, because of this we are blinded by our allegiance to certain theories and it really prevents us from doing children some good. I think the preschools and junior and senior kindergartens are particularly good places to identify these problems and start doing something about them.

There is another area that emerged from these questions and that is, essentially how much structure are we going to introduce in the educational system? Obviously there is a great deal of debate among educators about what that should be, but what we need to do is recognize that there are certain basic skills that have to be learned, unfortunately by rote, that there are things like the sounds of the letters in English, the times tables, English spelling, all of which you just simply have to memorize. There is no way of doing it using a problem-solving approach. Foreign language vocabulary is just simple memorization.

However, that does not mean science, arithmetic problem-solving, creative writing and all of these other areas are not things that are done by rote. Often one finds doctrinaire educational philosophies that say learning should not be by rote etc. Well, there are some things that just have to be learned that way and we have not

distinguished enough in terms of education at any level, but particularly for young children, between what is necessary to learn by rote and what can be learned in a more interactive problem-solving way. So I think that we need more recognition of this at all levels of education. I think that basically concludes my remarks. I will be glad to answer questions.

The Chair: I had an indication that there are some questions.

Mr Neumann: First of all, I enjoyed your presentation, and I think one of the positive results we can get from the expansion of formal day care in our society and the extension of kindergarten to the junior kindergarten level is the early identification of children with difficulties. That is an area of strong interest that I have, so I am very pleased that you commented on that.

What I want to ask you is, from your knowledge of having observed education in Ontario, where are the blockages to the communication and follow-up that should take place between the day care system and the school system? If the people who operate the day care program identify children who could be at risk, is that being communicated at the entry point to the school system, and what can be done to improve that?

Dr Siegel: That is a very good question. No, it has not been communicated at all. Now why does this happen? Basically it is the reluctance of the school system to admit that there are these young children with difficulties. The belief is that the children will simply grow out of it or that children develop at different rates. So when health professionals, psychologists or day care centre workers identify a child with a problem, that is just simply often not taken seriously in the school system. But I do not know whether there is even a mechanism that exists, because I do not think that in most places there is any formal way for the kindergarten teacher to talk to the day care centre worker or the preschool teacher. There is just simply no mechanism.

Mr Neumann: Do you have a pretty good knowledge of the kind of training that ECE graduates get?

Dr Siegel: I have seen some of it.

Mr Neumann: Are they given adequate instruction? I realize they are not specialists in children with special needs, but are they given adequate instruction to at least look for the warning signs?

Dr Siegel: I have seen the programs at Mohawk College and Ryerson Polytechnical

Institute, which are the only ones that I am familiar with, and I think that those issues are certainly discussed. I know I have spoken both at Mohawk and at Ryerson about these issues and there certainly is an interest there.

Mr Neumann: My second area of questioning relates to the role of the parents. I have had some experience in this area with the legislation that exists in Ontario where children are supposed to be directed to the program best suited to their special needs, and parents sometimes have a difficult time knowing that process, how to respond and how to work with the school system and with their child to ensure that the child gets into the best placement. Do you think parents have enough support to find their way through that system?

1440

Dr Siegel: No. I think you have hit on the major weakness of the system, because I am involved with a lot of parents, helping them through that system. The system breaks down in a number of ways. The first is the whole identification of which children should receive these services. In my experience there are many systems that are very rigid and that have very strict definitions, but they are not very thoughtful definitions, so they exclude children from services. For example, a lot of them use the IQ tests when they are really inadequate for different cultural groups and different socioeconomic levels. Children with language problems are going to end up with a low IQ and then it is said that they are retarded rather than having a learning disability. All of this happens.

Parents are confronted with this information and there is no way for them really to evaluate the information. I think the schools misuse the testing and then the parents do not know how to interpret it. Often in my experience the parents do not really know what their rights are in terms of access to help for their child. Many of the parents who have the most problems are the ones who are least comfortable in school, either because they come from different language backgrounds or because they have not had much education themselves, or they are from different cultural backgrounds. So they are most uncomfortable acting as advocates for their children. I think it is really quite a serious problem. The parents do need a lot of help, but I think schools need some help too.

Mr Neumann: Do you think this earlier entrance into the school system, and with some attention paid to that, would help the parents if

they were able to start at an earlier age in the child's school life?

Dr Siegel: That is one aspect that would help, but unless there is a significant change in the thinking in the educational system, that change is not going to make enough of a difference.

Mr Neumann: When you say "significant change," can you help me understand what you mean by that?

Dr Siegel: Okay. I mean in terms of the importance of the early identification of these difficulties, and not just waiting for them to disappear.

Mr Neumann: Even with all the progress we have made, is there still that attitude there?

Dr Siegel: I really do not know why it is, but it must be once a day that I get a call from parents to assess their child. I do this as part of a research project at OISE. I see children who have obvious reading problems, or difficulties with arithmetic, handwriting or spelling, and they just simply have not been picked up; or if they have been picked up there has not been any adequate attention to them. This is still happening and it is incredible to me in this day and age that it is. One of the barriers is this rigid notion that children will just grow out of this, and they do not grow out of it.

Mr Neumann: I realize there may be other people who wish to ask questions; I do have one more but I will come back later to give other people a chance.

The Chair: Sure. Okay. Then you may have two or three. Others may have questions as well; very good.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for your presentation; I enjoyed it. I want to ask you some questions flowing from it and also, they may go further than you want to go. Just say so if that is the case, because I am not sure exactly what your connections have been in terms of training of teachers and that sort of thing.

At the moment we have a system that has a rigid entry date for a child into formal education. The JK-SK initiatives are still not going to be mandatory in the sense of mandating parents to send their child to the system, and we do not know yet what the takeup will be. We can presume it will be in excess of 80 per cent, one would think, looking at just the trends. But as much as 15 to 20 per cent of the population's children still may not go through that preparation for school, so a number of children will be coming into the first grade with a pretty broad range of experiences in terms of socialization,

forgetting their own development, as you said, at that point. Have you done any looking at all at the notions of flexible entry times for children to come in, to recognize their individual development needs, rather than the specific dates, month of birth, that we go by now?

Dr Siegel: There is some very interesting research one of my colleagues in Alberta has done that pertains to that issue. What he did was to look at children who came into kindergarten or were in grade 1, children who either just missed the cutoff so they were older than most of the children, or children who just made the cutoff, so these two groups have an 11-month or 10 1/2 month difference in age. He followed their progress through the first three grades.

Actually what you find is that the children in these two groups, although they are very different from the age of entry, make the same amount of gain in terms of their reading, math and language skills. So essentially it does not matter in most cases how old you are when you start; given these limits, you seem to make the same gain. Of course the ones who are 10 or 11 months older start out ahead, but if you look at the rate of growth, it is the same.

I think there really is not any particular reason to go to a more flexible entry system, because I think that could really create a lot of difficult problems. How is it decided when a child is ready? Are you going to leave this up to the parents? You are going to get some parents who have very unrealistic expectations of their children or want to push them ahead, and that is going to create a lot of difficulties.

On the other hand, what you can do to deal with this issue of the individual differences, which are really quite serious, is to have the kind of educational system that can be a little bit more flexible in the programs that are offered to each child, so it may mean having smaller classes, it may mean having two teachers per class so that children who are at different points in the development of skills can be offered different programs.

I think maybe in an ideal world it might be better to have a flexible entry date, but I think that really would make life very complicated and I think that putting the emphasis on what actually happens to the child in school is probably better for the child than worrying about exactly how old the child is when he or she goes. I think those are the kinds of issues we need to pay attention to.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I may come back to some of that, because in some ways that challenges some of the things we were told in other sessions.

Dr Siegel: I can believe that, and we can go over some of the methodological issues, but this probably is not the place. Regarding the other question you raised about the children who come into grade 1 without any preparation in terms of schooling, one of the difficulties with the junior and senior kindergarten programs and even with the preschool programs is that of women who work: these half-day programs are totally inadequate for somebody who has to work.

If you have to work or choose to work, who looks after the child? The child is only in these programs two and a half hours. What happens the rest of the time? How do you get the child into some sort of child care situation? In some places, in Toronto, I think, there are facilities for that, but if you go outside of Toronto it is very rarely the case that there is any way to get children from the half-day school to any kind of day care centre or child care arrangement. This is a major problem with those programs, and I would expect that most of the children who are not in those programs are not in them for that reason, although I do not know of any data to support that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One wonders. I will come back to that relationship with child care, especially child care in the schools, which there does not seem to have been any rationalized approach to by the government in terms of just what the function of the day care centre is in the school, and why the centres are just in the new schools rather than pressing them elsewhere if we are going to move into a lot of half-day JK.

Can we go to the class size stuff that you just briefly touched upon? We have the strange situation where we have the child care centre under the Ministry of Community and Social Services with an eight-to-one ratio for kids, or 12-to-one for six and over, but no curriculum. Then we have some kind of curriculum for JK but we have no class sizes; that is determined by each of the boards. Have you done any work at all around the class size issue in terms of, again, this whole transition into the school system and the problems of early identification and what optimal numbers are? Is there much work done on that?

Dr Siegel: There is not much as far as I know, but particularly with the younger children I think everybody feels that the classes of 30 and 35 are just simply too big. It would, I think, be better if we could have smaller classes but, if that turns out to be difficult, maybe have slightly larger classes but with two teachers in the classroom. Again, that is not an optimal ratio but I do not know any way around it unless the system is

willing to put a lot more money into it, and I would hope that would happen but I do not see that.

It just seems to make sense that children, particularly below the age of five, really do need to have some contact with an adult. If there are 30 children and one adult there is not going to be much contact that they can have, and that is just the logic of it. So it is too big, but I do not see us making any changes in it unless we want to spend a lot more money.

1450

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree that it is problematic, but it is also sort of quasi-contradictory. We have a government that has stated a goal of reducing class sizes in grades 1 and 2 to 20 to one from what they have been and mandating that across the province, and it is moving into JK and SK without that kind of requirement. The clear reason for it is that they are providing capital money for JK and the implications on JK, if you reduce the class size down to, say, the 12-to-one ratio, even of the upper level of the day care communities at the moment, the capital cost would be far more than the government wants. If you then look at the next step, which is SK, senior kindergarten, they are basically saying, "Go ahead; we want you to do this," and the expectation on parents should be to go into this, but we are not giving any capital money. So therefore if you tried to have, again, a lower class size there, the school board is going to bear the brunt of all that cost, and you cannot expect the property taxpayer to assume all that.

Dr Siegel: There is one solution to it which has never really seriously been considered, and that is using older children as helpers with these younger children. Now, there is literature that is growing on something called peer tutoring; this is children teaching other children, and in many cases it has been quite successful. So I think for a variety of reasons it would be very useful to have older children working with younger children which would, to some extent, help the ratio issue. It will not take care of all of the concerns about that, but I think it would be as good for the younger children as it would be for the older children.

I think there are many consequences to it, and I have often wondered why this is not exploited more often; for example, having children of grade 3 or grade 4 reading to younger children. They are certainly capable of reading the books that exist for younger children, playing with them and talking to them and that would be,

maybe in some cases, better than having adults do it. But there are those kinds of solutions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would warn against that as a solution myself. Coming from your initial theme I can see that as a wonderful add-on and a very good way for those children to reinforce their reading skills, because teaching is the best way to really solidify your learning, but if you then say that one of our major goals is to early-identify and you say, "Let's have bigger class sizes and use kids to do this kind of stuff," then we will identify even fewer kids than we are identifying now.

Dr Siegel: That is true.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would say that that is a dangerous road to go.

One other question, then I will open it up and I will come back in after David's list, and that is the training of teachers at the moment. Part of the problem, in my view, is the whole IPRC process and the way boards are using that; but part of the problem is also, are the teachers we are putting into the system, with the class sizes they are being put into, capable of doing the identification that is required and are they getting the training they should be getting? We had real trouble getting answers on the training this morning in terms of what is available. I wonder if you have information for us from your perspective on the early ID side of things, as to whether or not the training that people are getting, either in ECE or at the faculties of education, is appropriate or sufficient for doing the kind of real identification that you think is necessary.

Dr Siegel: I think the teachers are certainly capable of doing it. Teachers, primary teachers, in either ECE or kindergarten, grade 1, in most cases, are not getting the training to do it, but the bigger barrier is the resistance of the system even to allow them to do it. I have seen a number of cases of children when they are older; the kindergarten or grade 1 teacher has picked up the problem and nobody has paid any attention to what the kindergarten or grade 1 teacher said. It is ignored and again, the whole issue is, "They will simply grow out of it."

Even though they could use more training—many of them are still picking it up—it is getting ignored in the system. But I do not think it would take much training to do; I think this process of identification is not as mysterious as it is made out to be. Actually, there have been some studies looking at systematic testing batteries versus teachers' observations of that in terms of identification. The teachers' observations are almost as good, or as good, as the formal testing

battery. So however they be trained, and maybe it is not completely adequate, with many teachers it is adequate to pick up the problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is the training?

Dr Siegel: You mean, what is the training they should have?

Mr R. F. Johnston: No; first, what is it? If you are going to the faculty of education at the University of Toronto, what do you receive in your one year to prepare you for the early identification of problems? Then you can go from there in terms of what it should not be if you want.

Dr Siegel: You do not receive very much, because there is a philosophical resistance to the whole idea of early identification in the faculty of education at the University of Toronto.

Mr Neumann: Really?

Dr Siegel: So that is a problem, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you talk a bit about that? Do they not think a teacher should do this or do they not think—

Dr Siegel: They do not think it should be done. I will not characterize the whole faculty, but from my experience there is a resistance to this whole idea of labelling. In many places they say it is not a good idea to label a child, that there is a potential problem. If you are not going to label, then you are certainly not going to be able to do early identification.

The excuse is that it is not good for this child's self-concept, and all that. In fact, the evidence we have is that the labelling, if properly done, can be beneficial rather than harmful; it is labelling with a purpose. For example, I labelled many children with learning disabilities and I have never had any who were unhappy with the label. As a matter of fact, most of them are quite relieved, because their hypothesis was that they were stupid, the reason they were not learning was stupidity, and it is really encouraging for them to have a label of learning disability.

This resistance to labelling is one of the reasons, not just at the faculty of education but in most faculties of education, in teacher training, there is a great resistance to early identification and labelling.

The Chair: There is a supplementary over here and then I will come back to Richard.

Miss Roberts: I just want to comment on your answer to Mr Johnston, that indeed part of the problem is that it is identified early, but because there is not the proper stature for the teacher of grade 1, grade 2 or kindergarten, she is not

accepted in the system appropriately; they have always sort of thought: "Let Miss Smith do that. She's been here for 90 years and she has always looked after grade 1." They do not really accept it. That is another thing the committee should be looking at, the importance of this and making sure that in the school boards and in the schools themselves the worth of the teacher's explanation, especially in the lower grades, should be taken into consideration.

Dr Siegel: That is actually a very important issue. What happens in the system in terms of the identification is that all kinds of specialists are brought in who I am sure have very good things to say. But in almost all the cases I have dealt with, the teacher had identified the learning problem quite adequately. It is necessary to have some empirical validation of it, but it does not have to be the extent to which the IPRC process goes. Sometimes I have been in IPRCs where there were 20 people in the room and this is not a really constructive use and yet, if you ask the teacher, in most cases the teacher would have come up with a very good discussion of the problems.

1500

Miss Roberts: Often it is not necessary for that teacher to have any formal training in identifying problems. The teachers, having gone through their basic training, are very good at coming up with those problems and I think that is a very important part of it.

Dr Siegel: An experienced teacher also knows what is within normal limits and what is outside of normal limits.

Miss Roberts: At the earliest, from the time that a teacher will identify it, two years later it gets to the committee and that is wrong. The teacher identifies it. It should be dealt with immediately.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Does the one-year training and the limited amount of practicum that is in that provide that new teacher with that capacity? I guess that is what I want to know; I want to know what the training is and whether their ability, when they come out of the faculty, is to be able to do what you are saying is needed.

Dr Siegel: I have not seen any evidence that the training specifically deals with these issues in any way. However, many people who choose to be teachers are very sensitive and very good observers of child development and do it anyway, so a little bit of training would help; but it happens anyway because of the quality of the people who have gone into the profession.

Mr Furlong: I have a comment on two points, I guess. The first is, you indicated that you felt that the teachers have sufficient training, that they are good in identification. This morning we heard that someone who was teaching in the primary and early grades had to be a psychologist, a sociologist and a whole lot of other things. I take it that is not your view of the system.

Dr Siegel: No.

Mr Furlong: The second thing is your comment about a child identifying himself or herself as stupid and going through the process. One of the concerns that has been raised to me by some of my constituents, when we were dealing earlier with streaming ability grouping and other things, is that there is a danger—children who are in the lower levels or lower groupings were coming out with that very statement, "I am stupid." The argument was: "It's a copout. The child's really not stupid, but he or she is using that because he or she does not want to do the work."

I was interested in your comment when you said that in your view, in all the testing you have done, in fact the reverse is true, that the child feels some relief in that there is a learning disability of some kind. Could you sort of elaborate on that, the testing or whatever has been done?

Dr Siegel: One of the problems is the use of the IQ test, which I generally stay away from in terms of dealing with a learning disability. That is what is used, variations of the IQ test. They might call it a verbal ability test, but that is used to stratify and classify children, and I think that is very destructive. When I identify a child as having a problem, I talk about the things he can do well and the things that give him difficulty, but in terms of the basic skills, the language skills, reading, spelling, arithmetic, rather than in terms of intelligence.

I think the whole use of these IQ tests and the variations of them for streaming is very dangerous and destructive and serves no useful purpose in the educational system. One of the major difficulties, in addition to all the cultural variations, is the fact that most of these IQ tests rely on specific knowledge. They are not tests of basic reasoning or problem-solving; they are tests of how much you know in terms of specific facts. I do not know what purpose it serves to classify children or anybody on that basis.

But also, the IQ test assumes there is just one level, and people really have a whole different pattern of strengths and weaknesses. For example, a lot of the children I see who have reading

problems have very good musical or athletic abilities, and they are not recognized in the IQ test. The IQ tests, most of them, depend on reading or language skills; so these children are disadvantaged. I think children really like you to tell them honestly what their strengths and weaknesses are, but in terms of this overall ability level I cannot see any usefulness in the educational system.

Mr Furlong: I would just like to pick up on a comment that Richard made and what you were saying about upper grades—four, five and six—coming down and reading and doing other things. His concern was that we may be compounding the problem and how to identify if you are not there. Just a comment: I have a daughter in grade 6, and they have that system in Durham region, where she goes; it is like a Big Sister concept and they do that very thing. I do not know what it does for the junior kindergarten child, but I know it does wonders for her.

Dr Siegel: Yes, and actually there have been some studies about children identifying social and emotional difficulties in other children, and they are really quite good at it, probably as good as teachers, but certainly good at it, so I am not sure that it is a major problem.

The Chair: Before we go into the second round, I just have a couple of questions myself, first of all on your comments about the faculties of education talking about labelling kids. I think that grows out of an earlier time when kids were labelled and nothing was done with them. This seems to drag on in our thought processes, that we should not label kids. But now much more literature has been written and much more treatment kinds of things have been done so that a kid does not need to be adversely affected by the label. I appreciated your bringing that to the committee's attention because it is an important change in how we educate the total kid, and not just reading, writing and arithmetic from the old days. I see you shaking your head affirmatively.

Dr Siegel: Yes, but that philosophical commitment to the lack of labelling still lingers on, and not just at the faculty of education; even in my own faculty we would find some people who would firmly hold to that point of view. As you said, the critical thing is that we now have ways of dealing with these problems, I think, also if they are labelled appropriately—and not just stick on a label and then walk away.

The Chair: So the grade 1 teacher talked to the grade 2 teacher and said, "This kid is a basket case," or whatever, and was not dealing with the

actual problem of identifying exactly what it was.

I was interested in your work at Covenant House and Street Youth. When you said that a lot of them were learning-disabled—you said about 87 per cent were LD kids—you said that was not their only problem. In your experience, is their lack of feeling of self-worth due to being LDs and not having been identified, treated or whatever, and that leads to the other problems that you encounter in this whole situation?

Dr Siegel: We looked at that because we had a small group of them who were not LD, who had perfectly normal skills and actually functioned reasonably well in school. We looked at a whole lot of background variables, whether they had alcoholic parents or whether any who came from divorce, separations, single parents, whatever you could think of, and actually there was no difference in all those background factors between the ones who had learning disabilities and the ones who did not. I do not think those factors are causal; I think they are a consequence or they co-occur with a learning disability. But the major problem is that the learning disability or the school problems were not sufficiently taken care of.

The Chair: So they fell further and further behind in their socialization than the others.

Dr Siegel: That is right. By this time it is very difficult to get them into a situation to remediate the problems; there are literacy programs that exist, but it is hard for them to get even decent jobs without the basic literacy skills. Also, their self-concepts are absolutely devastated by this point; that is very difficult to remediate. It would be so much easier to take the grade 1 and 2 kids and do something with them, which is being done, hopefully, than to wait until they are 18 to 22.

The Chair: That is when social services and corrections basically take them on.

Now we are into round 2.

1510

Mr Neumann: Following up on what we had started on earlier, talking about early identification and communication, we talked about the linkages between the day care system and the school system. Do you have any comments on the other agencies in the community that could assist in early identification and what kind of communication exists among those and with the school system, such as the public health nurses, the children's aid society and so on?

Dr Siegel: The public health nurses, the general practitioners and the paediatricians—most families have contact with any one of these health professionals when the children are younger. That would be an ideal way to start identifying, and hopefully this information would be communicated to the schools, although what really should happen is that we need to have services for these children when they are younger.

For example, if a child is having a severe language delay at three, and you can identify that very reliably at three, then there should be preschools or programs in the community to help those children; so maybe you can alleviate the problem before they even get to school, before they even start formal schooling.

It is the same thing with infants who have significant delays in motor behaviour or conceptual behaviour. We can pick those up reliably at a year, maybe even earlier, and there are infant stimulation programs that exist that these children need to be placed in.

But you have hit on the issue of how we co-ordinate all of these services. It seems to me, because most families visit either a general practitioner or a paediatrician, that might be the place to do it. The best would be the public health nurse, who in many communities makes a visit to every family after the birth of a child. We have even explored the possibility of doing some work in North York with the public health nurses, having them do developmental screening.

One of the issues we run into, first of all, is financing the research project, because it turns out to be reasonably expensive. Also, when we identify these children there are not enough programs; there is not any point in doing identification unless there are programs for them. I think through that kind of co-ordination it is possible, but it is very difficult in our society, where we respect people's privacy and where there are rules about freedom of information. So it is very difficult to have any kind of co-ordinated system where this information is transmitted.

Mr Neumann: Some kinds of problems that children face, such as learning disabilities, are created by preventable causes such as drinking during pregnancy. Are we making any progress in the area of prevention, from your perspective?

Dr Siegel: I do not think we are making significant progress because we are still not picking these children up earlier. We really could be picking most of them up at one year of age, certainly at three years of age, and helping them.

Mr Neumann: I meant on educating young women and young men about the risks or the damage that can be done to the child's ability to learn through drinking and taking drugs.

Dr Siegel: I think we are making some inroads in the middle class, and even then I am not convinced that we are making very much in the way of dealing with these issues in a preventable way. Some of the learning problems are really not preventable in that traditional way, in the ways you talk about, because a lot of the problems have a genetic component to them.

Mr Neumann: I realize that. I was talking about the ones that are not.

Dr Siegel: Yes. There are certain kinds of behaviour disorders which, it now turns out, are probably more a function, although nobody knows exactly what the mechanism of paternal alcohol consumption is rather than maternal, although that is certainly a factor. I have not yet seen any education about that.

Miss Roberts: That is good news.

Dr Siegel: Mothers cannot be blamed for everything.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is important, though, for those of us pregnant fathers who have been drinking for two, seriously, during this pregnancy. That is another matter.

I am sorry, I had to step out for a second and so I am not sure what was covered. If you have already covered something, please just tell me and I will let somebody brief me or I will read Hansard six weeks from now to find out what it was.

I want to get back a little bit to the relationship in the school system between the child care system and the JK-SK system. We were talking mostly of teachers before, but have you done much work in terms of the effectiveness of ECE workers in identifying difficulties, and what their training is to be able to identify problems in their children, given that the curriculum demands are obviously much—they are totally ill defined within Community and Social Services; that is not their mandate. We were talking mostly about teachers in JK-SK, but what about the other side of things?

Dr Siegel: I have done a lot of work with children in preschools and talked to a lot of teachers in preschools and day care centres also, and again I find the teachers for the most part to be very perceptive about the children's problems, the children who have problems. I do not know the extent to which it is a formal part of their curriculum, but I think it is the same

situation, that many of them certainly have the potential to do it if we would listen to them, and maybe with a little bit more training, if we also had services to provide the children, because we really do not have enough for these young children with difficulties. I certainly think that most teachers of young children are capable of doing it, and in my experience they do it informally, but nobody pays enough attention to them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Rather than having a system that is resistant, in their case they do not have a system, essentially. There are no linkages for them except for those, one would presume, that increasingly are being housed in schools themselves. There again I guess we come down to the communication problem. If it is hard for a JK teacher to initiate action on behalf of the child whom he or she has identified, then it probably will be triply hard for a person in a child care centre to identify it if the JK has not identified it and the education system proper has not identified it, I would guess.

Dr Siegel: That is a problem of the system. One possible solution, although I think there are many difficulties with this, is not having all kinds of separate ministries and separate control, but having one unified control of child care. I would be a little bit reluctant to give that over to the educational system as it now exists. Although it is a good idea in theory, it is not clear who is going to do it. I think that is obviously the direction we need to move in, but we have to seriously think about who should be responsible for this.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you tell me, from a developmental perspective, how many of the preventable, manageable or remediable problems can be identified before the preschool period? I would presume there must be a theory that the earlier, the better, in terms of identification, and then some kind of remediation. How early can some of these problems be identified, whether they are behavioural problems, dyslexia or whatever?

Dr Siegel: I have identified them with a risk index. I followed children for eight years and then I went back and looked at what factors had identified the ones who turned out to have learning disabilities. We can identify that in 90 to 95 per cent of them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: At what age?

Dr Siegel: At birth or shortly after, but you can certainly do it reliably at a year.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If that is the case, does that argue for implementing some kind of system that ensures that our early childhood centres do this identifying, rather than thinking about it happening at the JK-SK level?

Dr Siegel: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: All that is left is that four per cent of kids involved, of course, who visit the SK.

Dr Siegel: It could certainly be done through the public health nurses, but as long as you have some programs for the children, as long as you have infant stimulation programs and programs for the parents and all that, yes; certainly we have the capabilities to do it. Now, it is not perfect; in my system and the system that other people have developed, we overidentify a little bit so that some of the children who we predict are going to have problems do not.

It is not a perfect system, but the consequences of that are not particularly negative, because all that would happen to these children is that they were put in a program that certainly would not do them any harm. We now have a lot of data that these infant stimulation programs do good; there is no data that they do any harm, so they are not going to do them any harm. They are not identified with any kind of label. We just said, "This program is available," and most parents would gladly take advantage of it. They are a very effective and stimulating development.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The number of those that are available are very small in the province. If we are then talking about setting up a system which in some way would be adjunct to the childhood education system, which is already a mixed bag in terms of what is out there, how would you see that working, I guess the follow-up part of it?

Dr Siegel: Ideally, I would see all the children who were born in the province identified in some systematic way by the public health nurse and then, on the basis of the public health nurse's recommendation, put into some sort of program. Now the actual monitoring of the success of that program could take place through any of the existing health care facilities. Most children go for regular checkups, and there is not any reason why physicians or public health nurses, if that is who is doing it, could not be educated in what sorts of things to look for. Many physicians are. I have been involved for many years with the training of physicians and there has been a switch in the emphasis toward developmental medicine, but there is still a long way to go.

That is how this mechanism could be worked. Certainly at entry into school, whether it is junior kindergarten or kindergarten, there can be some monitoring of how the child is functioning in different areas. Even then it is not too late for remediation if something was missed along the way.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again, if they had identified my problems with math earlier, I would not have had to become a socialist.

The Chair: Wow. Retroactive remediation.

Ms Poole: Now you tell us. Why didn't you tell us sooner?

The Chair: Thank you very much. We have appreciated your presentation. The committee stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1524.

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Early Childhood Education

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday 24 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday 24 January 1990

The committee met at 1016 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: I would like to call this meeting to order. We have a couple of things to deal with. I just wanted to deal with the first issue, as we are travelling this afternoon, and have an indication how many are going to be with us this afternoon, which I think the clerk has already investigated. We will be gathering at the main entrance of the legislative building at 1:30.

Mrs O'Neill: Inside or out?

Mr Jackson: Bring your coat.

The Chair: Yes, bring your coat so you can get in the cab. We will be departing by cab over to Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Those of you who are going on your own, the early learning centre is at 50 Gould Street, which is right in the Ryerson complex. If you go through the quad, there is a playground there and the entrance to the west Kerr Hall will be marked. You can go in and meet Anne Ellison, acting director of the early childhood education operation over there. I think a couple may be going on their own, I am not sure, but if you could indicate during the meeting to Tannis if you are going to be with us, she can arrange transport and we will get going.

We have before us this morning the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Eva Nichols, perhaps you could introduce your other two co-presenters and we could get started.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mrs Nichols: Thank you. On my right is Heather Holden, and she is the provincial president of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. She was elected to that position at the end of October. Heather is the parent of four children, two of whom have learning disabilities, and she is past president of the Halton chapter of our association.

Interjection.

Mrs Nichols: Yes, by all means applaud.

Mr Jackson: One of my favourite constituents.

Mrs Nichols: She has also been the leader of a parent support group called Hyperaid for parents who have children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

On my left is Lynn Ziraldo, and you have met her before. She is the executive director of the Learning Disabilities Association of York Region and also the chairman of the educational policy and legislation committee for the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Lynn has two children, both of whom have learning disabilities.

Before we go into our presentation, there are just a couple of things I would like to draw your attention to. One is the poster that is on the wall up there. I felt that you may be interested in that. That is the current poster of the association. We have a public awareness month each year, the month of March, right across the country. This particular poster, if you are not able to read it from where you are sitting, says "Healthy baby, healthy future?" with a question mark.

Interjections.

Mrs Nichols: It is not a reading test, Richard.

It focuses on the fact that babies learn at their own rate and in their own way and that one in eight babies will show signs of learning disabilities which, if they do not get help, will interfere with their ability to learn. We are very thrilled with that poster and the baby that is depicted in it, so I thought you would like to see that and have it. I have given a copy to the clerk.

In addition, I have given to the clerk a couple of other things that I would just like to mention before we go into our presentation. One is a book that we have just published called Making Good Choices for You and Your Baby, and that focuses on prevention of problems in childhood and of course in adulthood. It does not specifically talk about preventing learning disabilities, but it is about preventing learning problems and behavioural difficulties. It does not look very big, but a lot of effort has gone into this. It is written at a grade 5 reading level and that level was chosen very carefully so that any young woman who perhaps—

Interjection.

Mrs Nichols: Mr Neumann, I certainly was not going to say that.

Interjections.

Mr Jackson: It will work for the Liberal caucus, anyway.

Mr Keyes: Well, that is more than I can say for some.

Mrs Nichols: Absolutely the fifth amendment on that one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Perhaps they can help us.

Mrs Nichols: This is written so that young women who are classed as illiterate are able to understand it. We had as advisers 34 different professionals from across the country, including the Canadian Neurological Coalition and the Ontario Medical Association and the Canadian Psychological Association, and I feel that it may be of interest to you. As I said, Tannis has a copy of that.

The other thing is that last year or the year before, I am not sure which round, we presented to you copies of our critical issues register, which is the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario's issues registry of all educational policies. Last summer this was updated and streamlined by a law student, and we have given a copy to Tannis for your use, but if you wish to have additional copies, please let me know and we will of course provide them for you.

We have also given her a copy of our current communiqué, our quarterly publication, because there are articles in here by professionals about learning and how learning is interfered with by various medical and other conditions and we felt that this would be of interest to you.

Very last, I would just like to alert you to the fact that the association has a conference coming up on Friday 27 April. It is called On the Frontiers of Knowledge and it focuses basically on medical and research issues around the prevention of learning disabilities, early identification and the prevention of secondary problems like emotional and behavioural difficulties as a result of learning disabilities. I have some copies of these, if anybody is interested and would either like to attend or pass it on to somebody who may be interested.

Those are our goodies for you this morning and we hope that they are of help to you.

Interjection.

Mrs Nichols: It is late Christmas, early Valentine's Day, Richard; how about that?

The other thing I would like to comment on is that this Monday we received a copy of your last report and we would just like to say how delighted we were in the comments that you did make about special education and the funding of

special education, and also the strengthening of parent support initiatives in terms of advocacy and also that you have pushed for the introduction of the amendments to the Education Act. I do not want to focus on that. I just want to say that we are really pleased that a group such as yourselves has come out supporting basically what the parent associations have been asking for for some time. It is much appreciated and we hope that such a cordial relationship between your committee and our associations will continue after this round as well.

On that note, we would like to address the issue that you have before you, which is lifelong learning, and in particular looking at the pre-school, early childhood years.

There is an old Hungarian saying which, loosely translated, states that "all wise men carry on learning until they reach heaven." If you would like to have it, I can provide it to you in Hungarian. Notwithstanding the sexist nature of that saying, it is indeed true that all men and women need to keep learning throughout their lives if they are to lead useful, productive lives.

Lifelong learning has never been more important than it is today as we rapidly approach the 21st century. There are numerous reasons for this, including the facts that: people live significantly longer than they did before and therefore they will have a much longer retirement period, we hope; the typical workweek is shorter than it used to be, giving people more leisure time; today's young adults are likely to change their occupations or vocations or jobs at least three times throughout their working careers; and the available body of knowledge is much larger but is also much more accessible to the general public.

The question that one must ask is, what in fact does lifelong learning mean in this context? Is it schooling and formal education alone or does it include all kinds of informal learning that is available from many sources, in addition to the ones offered through the formal educational institutions?

There is no doubt in our minds that in this context lifelong learning must be interpreted in the broadest possible way so as to include formal training and on-the-job in-service training, as well as the numerous forms of individualized and group learning.

When one listens to experts who speak about the future, people like John Nesbitt or Frank Feather, it is really interesting to note to what extent they focus on the issue of broadening one's mind beyond one's career and looking at

goals in areas such as literacy and technology and even culture, with both small and capital C.

It is also interesting to note that some recent studies in Canada show that corporations, when they are looking at people to promote into the higher levels, prefer to take philosophy graduates over MBA graduates, on the grounds that when you study philosophy you really have to focus on broadening your mind and acquiring a love and a skill at learning, whereas presumably MBA graduates are viewed as focusing on very specific topics but not on the general skills of learning.

Clearly, then, the love of learning and the desire for lifelong learning are the dual tools which we must offer all learners for both their individual benefit and the benefit of society as a whole.

Acquiring these is never too early. There is some interesting research that shows that learning begins in the prenatal, intrauterine period. Some studies with ultrasound show the foetus, as early as the four-month in the gestation period, learning to suck his thumb and reacting in a very negative way if in fact that particular learning process is interfered with due to some kind of a neurological problem.

Also, of course, it is never too late to carry on learning, as the Hungarians say, until we reach heaven. Our focus today, of course, is early childhood and preschool education. I am making the assumption that Hungarians go to heaven. Absolutely.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is why there is so little room for the rest of us.

Mrs Nichols: Those of us who are Hungarian are all right.

We would hope that in future rounds you may look at the question of lifelong learning for the school-age person and the adult, with particular attention on the various transitional periods in the learner's life and development.

Our association's focus is the population that is identified as having or is presumed to have learning disabilities. Contrary to some of the mistaken assumptions that abound, people with learning disabilities are able to learn, provided that we know how to teach them.

Because the teaching style must be adapted to the learner's learning style even more precisely than for other populations, the twin concepts of love of learning and lifelong learning are even more critical. Further, since people with learning disabilities are so often plagued by self-doubt, lack of motivation and low self-esteem, they need our support in accepting that learning is possible and desirable.

For a young child, everything is a source of knowledge. A baby, once born, learns about himself, about his mother and the world around him. His curiosity is natural and all-encompassing. He acquires knowledge in a natural or informal way. This is sometimes referred to as incidental learning. Obviously, each child's rate and style of learning is very much his own, but provided that there is not an obvious major sensory, physical, medical, developmental or cognitive deficit, the child will learn. Unfortunately, the capacity for incidental learning is often absent in the child who has learning disabilities. Therefore, many of the things that we assume that a baby or a young child will pick up through this incidental learning have to be taught in a formal fashion to the child with learning disabilities.

1030

There are some very interesting developments occurring in the field of infant stimulation. As we learn more about the development of the human mind, we can do more to assist all those babies and their families who show signs of some special need in the perinatal period. Traditionally, such programs were not available to babies born with mild to moderate neurological damage, in spite of the fact that many of these children later showed obvious signs of learning disabilities. It is important that such infant stimulation programs be available for babies born with AIDS, foetal alcohol syndrome and drug addiction, as well as the more common perinatal problems such as oxygen deprivation, cyanosis, prematurity, low birth weight, excessively prolonged labour, etc.

The parent is the child's first teacher. Informally at first, more formally later, parents pass on their own attitudes towards learning and in turn help form the child's attitudes.

Everyone knows about the importance of reading to young children. Some of the most poignant stories in literacy programs come from parents whose burning desire to learn to read stems from their inability or difficulty with reading to their children.

The parent who has learning disabilities himself is particularly concerned about the chances of his or her children having the same problem. It is helpful if professionals such as family doctors, public health nurses and others are aware and able to identify learning disabilities at an early stage. That way the child and the family can learn to deal with the problem prior to the child entering school. This is particularly important for the child who has language

learning disabilities and/or auditory processing deficits. If such a child does not receive early intervention, the outcomes can be quite devastating from the point of view of the child's learning and future success.

While children who are deaf are able to access specialized government-funded services from age two on, there are no similar programs for the child with learning disabilities. There are, of course, some community-based services for children that will enhance their ability to learn and to acquire language. Unfortunately, parents frequently are not aware of these services. In order to enhance the parent's ability to access existing services and improve their parenting capabilities for the benefit of their child as a learner, improved parent training courses are needed.

In today's society, many children spend a significant period of their preschool time in a day care setting. Such settings, whether private or public, vary considerably in their approach, although one assumes that all are motivated by a genuine interest in the welfare of young children.

A recent research study carried out by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada showed some very interesting facts regarding the services available to very young children who are enrolled in day and child care centres. Many of the day care centres are providing integrated settings for children with special needs. However, the training of much of the staff does not include any formal training in identifying or programming for actual or potential learning disabilities. As a result, many children in such settings begin to establish an early pattern of failure and negative self-esteem.

It is also interesting to note that where such day care centres mention using a screening device to test for the identification of various developmental problems, many mention the use of certain tests which, in the opinion of learning disability experts—and they include Dr Linda Siegel, who addressed you yesterday—are particularly poor and ineffective. Clearly, training is required, and it must be ensured that if a potential developmental problem is identified, such information is fully shared with and explained to the parent.

If the expansion of junior kindergarten programs is to be a success as a breeding ground for lifelong learners, then it must provide an appropriate activity-based, individualized, language enriched program for every child. It must focus on the whole child, including the child's social, emotional, moral, physical and cognitive development.

Early identification programs must have access to accurate, up-to-date information on the child. Programming must take into consideration the finding of the early identification process through individualization, adaptation and accommodation.

We have often heard the statement, "But they're only playing." For a child, playing is learning. There is no better way to enhance the child's learning than by enriching his play experiences. The child who enjoys learning at a young age and who has a positive image of himself as a learner is much more likely to be a lifelong learner.

At one time it was believed that the child was a "little man," viewed by adults as someone to be instructed and moulded into an adult model as quickly as possible. This was essentially a passive and imitative mode of learning. Play is a child's active way of exploring his surroundings in an assimilative fashion. It is a very necessary part of the child's development.

If one reviews Piaget's theory of the way children acquire logic, the sequence is as follows: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete and then propositional. The ages at which children move from one phase to another vary according to the child's level of maturity, level of intellectual functioning and level of neurological readiness. Therefore, some children with learning disabilities may reach each of the milestones at a later stage than usual.

In order to reach the propositional or formal level of thinking, the child must be allowed to progress fully through the concrete stage. This requires the availability of concrete materials to the child and the chance for the child to manipulate these on an individual basis. In other words, the child needs to learn through activity and play.

In considering the child as learner, we cannot ignore the role of television. While actual figures vary, there is no question that most children spend more time in front of the television today than with their parents. Teachers tell us that today's child is quite different from the child of yesterday. He takes the communication offered by the electronic media for granted. He likely will have seen quite a bit of violence, whether on the news or on police shows.

There is no doubt that television can be a positive component in the child's learning experiences. The child who watches television is not necessarily reading less, and for the child who has learning disabilities, television can offer a mode of learning that perhaps is not quite as

important for other children. In fact, for the child with learning disabilities, television, computers and other video equipment can work as assistive devices in being exposed to important information and literature.

Once again, excellence in programming is the key and it is important to ensure that a sensitive, interested adult is available to discuss what the child has been watching. Television can be a mind-dulling, couch-potato-creating experience or it can be a challenging tool in striving for lifelong learning. The choice is very clearly ours.

Ultimately, the child has to internalize the simple fact that learning is fun. Further, having understood and accepted that in spite of his learning disabilities he can and will learn, he will realize that lifelong learning will be a source of lifelong pleasure.

Mrs Ziraldo: It is my pleasure now to present to you our recommendations on behalf of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. As I go through them, I am sure you might have some clarifications and questions, and we welcome that.

We recommend:

1. That prenatal education programs focus on the child's cognitive needs as well as other physical needs;

2. That infant stimulation programs be available to all infants who are at high risk for a developmental problem;

3. That training in parenting skills be made more widely available;

4. That all professionals in the helping professions be exposed to information about learning disabilities and about the implications of having learning disabilities for future learning;

5. That preschool language and auditory processing interventions be available to all preschoolers who need them;

6. That a program, similar perhaps to the well-baby clinics in Britain, be established to assist parents of children at risk for special needs;

7. That day and child care centre staffs be trained in identifying and programming for children with special needs;

8. That better communication links be established between day care centres and parents;

9. That the communication be enhanced at all transitional stages in the child's development;

10. That learning disabilities be recognized, identified and programmed for at all stages of a child's development; and

11. That the right of the child to having his learning disability accepted and explained to him be guaranteed, such that his self-esteem and his

image of himself as a learner becomes as positive as possible.

Those are our recommendations, and among the three of us, we welcome questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I can tell the amount of interest expressed in your presentation by the number of questioners I have before us, so I appreciate the fact that it was a very excellent presentation and I appreciate the fact of your taking the time to be with us.

1040

Mr R. F. Johnston: As usual, it is a good presentation. Thank you very much. You have to presume that these days in our ongoing relationship here.

I wanted to ask a few particular questions coming out of the recommendations. I presume recommendation 5 relates to your comments about deaf kids having access to program whereas learning disabled kids do not, which you mention in your text. I wondered if you could maybe be a little more specific for us in terms of what resources need to be available and the very specific access to programs mentioned in the regulations under the Education Act for deaf children. What kind of structures are we talking about here that would be necessary for program, etc, for kids with a learning disability who are identified?

Mrs Nichols: We feel that what is really lacking is some kind of a formalized setting, perhaps beginning through a medical referral to a hospital setting, where the child who, for example, is three or four years old and has absolutely no language, but deafness has been ruled out, could be referred for some kind of programming where language enrichment experiences are offered to the child, but also to the family so that in fact the family knows how to deal with that.

Because hospital-based programming is expensive, it could certainly occur in the community through some community-based clinics, or even through our association, if the money were made available, but I think the initial thing is really just the recognition through the medical profession that it is a significant problem where a child of that sort of age has absolutely no language and how to go about it. There is an excellent model in the Hanen Early Language Parent Program and Resource Centre, which does exist in Toronto, but there is one centre for that and clearly, based on the calls that we get in our office and our chapters receive locally, there is a great deal of demand for this.

Other places, for example, the Children's Psychiatric Research Institute in London, do provide some kind of programming for children on an extreme crisis basis, but there is no routine about it. Yet it seems to me that when a child is being looked at by the physician at around age three to age four, if indeed the child has no language, the referral should be automatic and in fact parents should not be told, "Oh, well, don't worry about it, he"—and it is usually a he—"will learn to speak later," because yes, the majority of the children do, and of course if they do not, if they continue to have really major difficulties, the programming at Sagonaska Demonstration School in Belleville is available to them.

Basically, school boards will not refer children to that program until the child is about age eight, and that is an awfully long time to proceed with that. If you look at the program at Sagonaska, it is a very good program, but the feeling you get from the professionals is that if somebody had done some of these things with this child at age three, the fluency and the ability to process the language would be a lot better.

Mrs Ziraldo: Just to expand the parent aspect of that, you know, the fact that parents would appreciate some of the training, because in most cases they are not professionals, I personally went through this with my son. My son is now 14, but the lack of services was there then, and of course I feel it still is in the long waiting list as far as speech and language pathologists are concerned.

If we can get them early, their frustration is hopefully not going to develop and then we will not be dealing with low self-esteem and perhaps behaviour problems because they are having trouble communicating. So I think anything that will stimulate the child—a community-based program would be my first suggestion, I think, as well as making sure that the parents are part of that program. They would have to be part of that program for it to work and to be cost-effective, because you are not going to have the personnel in some cases because of the lack of speech and language pathologists.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, I would really worry about it being a hospital-based thing like the Hospital for Sick Children program for hearing problems, for instance, because of the expense and because of the obvious need for centralization of that kind of thing, rather than being community-based, where possible, as you say, with more of an emphasis on how you are training parents to be the assistants or the trainers

in the system. That is very useful. Do you want to make some other comments?

Mrs Holden: What I wanted to say was that the lack of intervention is going to have a tremendous impact when this child reaches school. Children who do not communicate or do not communicate well will more than likely have difficulties, not only in dealing with instructions and the acquisition of written language, but they will have great difficulty dealing with peers. That means that in some ways, some children arrive at school with three strikes against them.

The acquisition of language in a verbal sense is what comes before the written. In some ways, those things are natural progressions. Children who show signs of verbal language delay more than likely will have difficulty acquiring the skills of reading and writing. It makes it very difficult for school boards to get children at the age of five or six who have had little or no intervention and the school boards then must hire speech pathologists and provide intensive intervention at the age of five or six. They are probably saying, "Why was this not done at the age of three?" If we take a more preventive approach, we may make childrens' lives at school much happier and much easier.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just to take a step back then in terms of the identification process, yesterday we had some discussion about the public health nurse being the major vehicle here. You seem to be suggesting a number of possible places where that could happen: through public health, presumably, although you do not mention that specifically, through family doctors and through the day care centres.

Can you talk a little bit about how we do that systematically? Surely that is the issue. Then I would like to come at what the next stage would be, how we then, after identifying, can actually mandate programs for kids preschool. First deal with the identification. Who is best equipped to make sure that that is done systematically?

Mrs Nichols: There is a very interesting pilot program going on at the Orillia hospital at the moment where every baby who is premature and is kept in the hospital for a period of time is tested for potential neurological damage for vision and hearing problems before the baby is allowed to go home. That information is passed to the parents and it is also passed to public health so that the public health nurse can go to the home and immediately begin training the parent in some intervention that the parent can do. That is certainly one excellent way of doing it

I was involved in doing grand rounds at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, where there was a great deal of discussion about this program, and they are talking about introducing it there. They do not feel it is particularly expensive to do, because there is so much—it is very expensive, of course, to have a very premature baby brought to a stage where the baby is ready to go home, but doing this kind of testing and then offering the intervention is such a small percentage of the cost that they seem to feel it is well worth it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is the neonatal approach.

Mrs Nichols: Yes. Obviously, one could not mandate that for babies who are born at term or who do not show some obvious distress at birth, cyanosis or whatever. The particular concern, of course, is around the AIDS babies and the babies born to addicted mothers. They may be born at term but we know now they will all have neurological damage as they proceed. Certainly that should be available to those children.

I think the involvement of public health altogether should really be stepped up, partly because the public health coming into the home is a much less threatening situation for the mother—and it is usually the mother who is there to deal with this—than going to a clinic or going somewhere else, and also, it is so much easier to show in the child's own home what are some of the things that can be done.

We also feel very strongly, and we do have the Ontario Medical Association's support on this but it has not gone further than just the child welfare committee saying, "You're right and we really should be doing something," that doctors really should know a great deal more about the whole business of soft neurological signs.

You see, there is not so much of a problem where the child has very clear-cut neurological symptoms which may result in cerebral palsy or some of the other more obvious, physically manifested neurological problems, but many physicians really are not particularly well trained to identify the soft neurological signs that things like learning disabilities and some other conditions show. We are certainly pursuing that through medical schools and so on, but we do feel, again, if the family doctor were able to help the parent—the parent has to be an integral part of any intervention, partly because it is not a good thing to say that only professionals will offer the intervention, it is not good for the child and it is not good for the family, but also, we cannot afford it. We could not have a paid case manager,

a paid trainer and a paid intervener for every child. In many cases, the family is more than happy to do it if the training is offered.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are talking here about a restricted group of children who will have a learning disability, whether it is the hyperactive child who gets identified later or someone with language problems who gets identified later.

I guess what I am also looking at besides the neonatal kind of intervention, which is clearly something that has been suggested a number of times before as something we should be doing more of, is, how would we guarantee that a child like yours would systematically be identified at an earlier stage? Who should do that and how do we make sure that that is done in some way that is systematic?

1050

Mrs Ziraldo: The first person I saw, other than my doctor, was the public health nurse, because he was a child who was at risk. Perhaps if that person who had come at that point was more aware of neurological problems, even though it was not cerebral palsy or a variety of other things, that would have, number one, helped.

I had to research. I had to search out where to go, and even though Wade is 14, I think there are still people today who are doing that.

I think what we need to figure out is, if it is public health nurses—I just did a major in-service in York region to all the public health nurses because of our public awareness campaign and gave them questions, very general questions that they could ask. You know, "Don't say, 'Does the child have a vision problem?' I am going to say no as a mom. But if you say to me, 'When you are looking at him, does he squint, does he stare a lot, does he blink a lot,' those are things I am going to respond to as a mom. But to whether he has vision problems, I am going to say no." I think the types of questions you do in a one-on-one assessment are going to make a major difference.

The first thing is that whoever is that first contact, whether it be the public health nurse or the doctor, has to have some type of training on learning disabilities. That has got to be the key thing. I think we in the association can assist there, but we still have to make sure that the colleges that are training these people who are going out in the field have learning disabilities as one component of their training. Heather might want to expand a little bit as well with the population that she deals with, but I feel strongly that we have to make sure that they are aware of

what learning disabilities are and then systematically ask the right questions.

From there, we can sit there and say, "Okay, as a team, how can we guarantee"—maybe "guarantee" is not the right word—"how can we assure that this child is going to get as much stimulation in language perhaps, or in physical or gross?" Some of them might have the fine motor, gross motor co-ordination so that we can stimulate them.

You just need a bit of guidance. Once I have the guidance, I can do it. But I am me. That is me as a parent. Some parents are going to need an awful lot of one-on-one guidance to be able to know how to do that and it cannot just be a one-month shot or a two-month shot, it has to be ongoing, and that has to be evaluated. I think the long waiting list is the key in a lot of these programs when you talk—and infant stimulation, the way it is right now, deals basically with developmental problems.

Learning disabilities do not fit under that definition, and that is a major impact when we are dealing with high-risk children with learning disabilities. We are going to know some of those high-risk LD kids, and basically we can probably say, I do not know, one or two per cent of the 10 to 15 per cent of learning disabilities are very high-risk and you know after the first year that we have a problem we are dealing with.

Heather, I do not know if you want to expand on that.

The Chair: We have a number of questioners in this period of time, if we could wrap this part of it up so we can get to the other folks.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I can come back with some questions.

The Chair: Yes, please do.

Ms Poole: First of all, welcome back to our committee. I always feel a particularly possessive feeling about you because you are in my riding. I know I should not do that, but I do appreciate your presentation today.

I would like to follow on the avenue where Mr Johnston was leading about the training of those dealing with young children. Perhaps we will look at the formalized setting first and then go to the informal and the parental input. With the formalized setting, those who take ECE or faculty of education or a course at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, do you find that any of those particular areas are focusing on learning disabilities and the identification of them in young children? Is it a major part of any of the courses?

Mrs Nichols: It certainly is not a major part of any of the courses and it is very much based on the individual interest of one particular participant. I was interested in hearing that you are going to Ryerson this afternoon, because last night I was invited to the Ryerson ECE program to go on 29 January to give them an afternoon's training on how to identify learning disabilities in the young child. That is very rewarding when they come and ask us to do this, but it is very much if somebody happens to be interested and expresses that interest. Our negotiations and discussions at the Ministry of Colleges and Universities level around that really have not produced any kind of curriculum change which mandates that kind of thing.

The one thing that I think perhaps may be of interest to you is if we provided your clerk with a copy of that research study that our Canadian association has done. It is true that is right across the country rather than just Ontario, but one of the things it has really identified is that the people who work in day and child care centres and the people who teach those people who are going to work in them feel that they are not particularly effective at identifying problems unless they are very obvious.

As we mentioned in here, they submitted a list of two that they are familiar with for identifying problems. The ones that they mentioned they use most frequently are some that we have been told are really ineffective but are easy to use, and that is unfortunate. One cannot blame the people who work in the day care centres, for example, for using a test that is not particularly effective if nobody has told them that it is not very effective.

I think there should be some kind of mandated statement, not just for learning disabilities but for a variety of not visible special needs that children will bring to a day care setting and where intervention, without any kind of segregation, would really be helpful. For example, many of the day care centres have very good language enrichment programs, but it is entirely if the child wants to participate. A child who has language difficulties is not going to select that unless somebody very gently urges that child in that direction. According to the people who work in those centres, that really is not happening.

We certainly feel that kind of training is very important for the ECE people. As far as the faculties of education are concerned, certainly since September 1984 it has been mandatory that the identification of special needs, including learning disabilities, is a component.

I mentioned to you before that I have a daughter who has just gone through that particular program at Queen's University, and certainly there was material made available in terms of identifying various special needs. Unfortunately—and you may say it does not matter, but it does matter—most of the materials that Queen's used for the special ed programs were American. The dilemma around that one is that it of course focuses on public law 94-142 instead of what is in Canada.

It is fine. Emma's class in fact got all the information it needed, because I certainly made sure, but that is very much again an ad hoc thing where there happens to be somebody who knows. It is unfortunate, because I know a lot of the research is happening in the United States, but there is an awful lot of really exciting stuff happening in Ontario, and in the rest of Canada, but particularly Ontario. It is unfortunate that the faculties of education are not using it as well as they might.

Ms Poole: You see in all those three areas that there need to be major improvements, first of all, in the mandating of not only identification but in dealing with some of the problems for special needs children, but also in ensuring that there is at least a significant proportion of Ontario-based research and material available to the students, and that this should be mandated in all three areas.

Mrs Nichols: Right. It is ironic, for example, that when the International ACLD, which is sort of a parent body, had its conference in Miami, it invited Linda Siegel to come and talk about the preschool period and our people are using American resources. That just does not make sense and I think there really needs to be some kind of very clear-cut mandate that you do not rule out everything that is American, of course, but where there are Ontario-based resources, we should be using those because they are the right things to use.

1100

Ms Poole: It seems to go back to our Canadian paranoia where we cannot accept that in certain things we can be the best.

Mrs Nichols: Exactly.

Ms Poole: And certainly as good. Sometimes I think we have to make a point of that. I really appreciate that recommendation.

I would like to move on to the more informal training that might occur. As you are aware, most of the child care arrangements in Ontario today

are not in a formalized setting but in the home, either by a parent or by an alternative care giver.

Right up the street from you, a five-minute walk, we have TVOntario. I am wondering what relationship your association has with TVOntario, whether you have a member on the board, whether TVOntario has been co-operating with you, not only in developing programs that would appeal to children and would assist children with learning disabilities, but also in the training mode for parents. Do you see that happening right now?

Mrs Nichols: No.

Ms Poole: What would you like to see?

Mrs Nichols: Where we do have a working relationship with TVOntario, although it is not formalized to the extent of our participating on their board or vice versa, is that when they are doing programs for teachers on special education, they always involve us and we will vet their text and provide any resource materials that they send out along with it.

I do not believe that TVOntario is as involved in parent education as it might be and I am not exactly sure as to why not. At one point, we had negotiated with them about a fairly formalized parent education program that, as an organization, we have been able to deliver to numerous parents. It was actually developed in Ottawa by staff from the Ottawa and the Carleton boards, a social worker and a psychologist, Jean Brassington and Norma Kuzzel.

This is a formal parent training program for parents whose children are at risk or who actually have learning disabilities or similar problems. It is not exclusive to learning disabilities. It is a 10-week training program, and we have trainers and many of our chapters are offering this on an ongoing basis.

We did suggest to TVOntario that this would be a very interesting program to deliver to parents. There is a book and there is homework and all those sorts of things, which parents may choose to do or not do, as the case may be. But there really has not been a great interest in that, because they felt that the chances are that parents would not watch TVOntario on that basis, for parent training.

Certainly our experience as an organization has been that whenever those series are offered—and some of our chapters do it continuously; they start again as soon as one round is finished—their roster is always filled. People really do want to learn how to parent the child. Lynn has been involved in some of those.

Mrs Ziraldo: We have run the parenting course in York region for the last two years—I was trained through Norma and Jean—and it has been fantastic. We constantly have a waiting list, and of course we cannot keep up with that because of funds and everything else. You do not need to hear that, but it is true.

The parenting course is 10 weeks and there is some commitment on your part and there is actual information about development and the stages a child goes through and behaviour techniques, etc., and exercises that you do with a child and you do as a family. It goes into family counselling and a variety of different things and has really made a difference to a lot of those parents.

When they come, they have to say, on an envelope or a piece of paper, how they feel about their child now and where they feel their gaps are, etc. After the end of the 10-week course, they open up the envelope and see how they feel now. Every one of them has said what a difference the parenting training course has made, whether it is because of the leaders and the fact that they have support from each other, which I think is good, and the stimulation, and they have seen a change.

This is just one way. I cannot stress enough how important the parent training courses are for our parents, especially with parents of children who are high-risk.

Ms Poole: I just think it is a shame that we have this tool right there that is funded primarily by the provincial government and that we are not using it for a very real need. I would like to see us making some sort of recommendation in that regard when we get to the report.

Mr Jackson: Thank you for a great presentation and 11 outstanding recommendations which I really believe are going to have an impact on this committee. I hope they are.

Let me talk to you about areas of concern I have. When we undertook our current activity, we were looking at day care and early childhood education. In my opinion, and I will not speak for the committee, we have been dealing with it in terms of its economic and political and jurisdictional implications, those three things.

Because we are getting into who is training whom, who is communicating with whom, who has got responsibility for the child this half of the day and then he goes to some other setting—and I am glad you did not get into all of that, because your message starts back earlier. It is an incredibly important message for us which I do not think a lot of people are wanting to talk about.

You are talking about developmental stuff for a child, and your poster speaks to it in very graphic, visual terms.

We have not gone back as far as you have suggested we should, and I have to admit that to you; we look at who is coming to talk to us. So your presentation is very important, because we did not ask for the OMA paediatrics division to come to talk to us.

Having said that, I want to share with you something I learned when I immersed myself in neonatal intensive care programs that are at risk in this province. I found out a few things that frighten me.

We have a growing number of high-risk, low-birth-weight pregnancies in this province. There is dramatic documented evidence. We have a 10-year longitudinal study out of Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals which clearly shows that we can reduce by 40 to 45 per cent the physiological and neurological damage with these premature babies, high-risk babies, because of the kinds of intervention services that are available. It is incredibly expensive. I mean, we have documented cases in Hamilton, for example, of level 3 nurseries and level 1 nurseries where mothers have been denied access to them, and just the simple thing of a manual respirator for a child puts in doubt the whole notion of whether or not that child may be sustaining some neurological damage in the process of his transition into the world.

What my fear has been all along with this is that we do not recognize that that is the point at which we, as politicians, and society have to react. I can never really understand this, I can only hope to try to understand this, but a mother realizes at that point that was when the difficulties were occurring. It also endured from conception on, of course.

So they go through this gap of, say, four years without that support or it is staggered support, "Gee, I'm starting out with the Ministry of Health, then I'm going to flip to Community and Social Services because I have day care needs and then I'm going to flip back to Education," and they are going to tell you everything you have heard before is inappropriate because they are educators.

Mrs Ziraldo: That is exactly right.

Mr Jackson: This thing has really been disturbing me. Neonatal intensive care programs are at high risk in this province. That has been documented and we are not doing anything about it, and yet we are contributing in that manner to

increased neurological damage and physiological damage to our children.

I will give you one more example. When I spent the time in these nurseries, talking to parents and mostly the medical personnel, I found out that in some hospitals in this province the Ministry of Health is actually saying, "You should not be saving that child at that age of premature birth." In other hospitals they save the children and they have the interventions and incredible successes.

We have a boy in our riding—you may even know him—who is only blind in one eye. That is the only thing that he suffered as a result of his premature birth. But in almost three quarters of the hospitals in Ontario, he would have been left to die and they would not have intervened. To me, it becomes critical that we understand the importance of that and provide the interventions.

Having shared all that with you, which is an area I know you know better than I do and the time did not allow you to really focus in that area, can you give us some clear suggestions that we might be able to put in this report in terms of—I am glad you started with lifelong learning, because that is what we are talking about here. Your recommendations discuss it. Can you revisit the essential recommendations in terms of giving us direction on the points that are in your brief and that I have raised in terms of early interventions, support, communication, especially support within the ministry? We are talking about the Ministry of Health here, very clearly, and that is not where we are getting the initial support. Could I get some feedback from you on all of that?

1110

Mrs Holden: I guess first of all I would like to say that for learning disabilities, there is a cost, and you either pay up front or you pay at the end. If you pay up front, sometimes you save yourself money. I am not so sure that from a financial position, the government is prepared to do that.

In the long term, if we look at the end result of unattended learning disabilities to the community, we look at adults who cannot hold a job, who are unemployed, and those costs are never-ending in some cases. The difficulty is that providing interventions at adulthood for learning-disabled individuals is extremely difficult.

From my point of view as a parent and as a nurse, I have to say we need to front-load the system, but we need to front-load the system from the very beginning, as you are pointing out, from birth, and not cut it off in some cases at,

say, the age of two, where maybe from a hospital point of view and a neonatal point of view they are saying, "The child is age two; there is minimal concern," and they let go of a child who in fact could be at risk.

The neonatal child who comes into this world premature is a child who very easily gets the at-risk category. Kids who come into this world at normal birth weight at normal time do not get a high-risk category and are somewhat not looked at in any way as being at risk.

I have two children, and both came into this world at normal time and at normal birth weight, but both have learning disabilities. In my view, those learning disabilities were picked up because of what I knew as a mother and as a nurse, that developmental stages were not going on.

I never saw a public health nurse, a public health nurse never came to my home, and if she had, I would have probably felt, not only as a mother but as a nurse, that I had somebody I could deal with who was only seeing very young children who could say to me: "You know, he's not talking. He's two and a half years old and he has no speech at all. I think between you and me we should look to find some help."

The reality of it is that I went looking for help on my own to my family doctor, who, because of the family situation, and this was a fourth child, said, "Don't worry, Mom, he's the fourth child and everybody in the family is talking for him." From a developmental point of view, I knew darn well that this particular child should be saying more than "uh" at two and a half, but I was not able to convince my family doctor.

I think that people who see only young children, like public health nurses—or that we should be using our public health nurses in that fashion, as they do in Britain. Public health nurses in Britain come into the home and come into the home regularly, and in some cases it is not because I as a parent invite them, it is because that is the way the system works. The public health nurse comes from almost the day that you come home from the hospital and is an ongoing, integral part of the upbringing, if you will, of a child, whether he happens to be an at-risk child or not.

I have a friend who works at McMaster and has dealings with the neonatal unit who also has a learning-disabled child. In looking at one particular child on an occasion, the comment was made by a physician that he really thought this child was going to be all right in the long term. At the worst, he might just have a learning disability.

I do not know how anyone can convey to another human being what it means to live in this world and have a learning disability, because it is not a trivial matter. I guess if we could convey anything to the outside world, it is the seriousness of living with a learning disability.

It is so serious that what we say is that we must do something from the very beginning. We cannot wait until a child goes to school. We cannot wait until he gets in school and see how he does. Interventions must be provided in the same fashion as we have now seen provided for developmentally mentally handicapped kids. That stimulation from the very beginning can have a great deal of impact on the outcome.

Mr Jackson: Briefly, if I can, I would ask you to focus on, in your opinion, some of the best programs that are addressing your concerns. You have mentioned the Orillia project, which I am a bit familiar with—

Mrs Holden: I am sorry?

Mr Jackson: The Orillia project for identification. Are there other programs that you can specifically refer us to? That will help our researcher if we wish to get more information on them specifically, since you have a provincial mandate and have an opportunity to get feedback on some of the best programs available.

I am going to have get some guidance and support from the rest of the committee, because again, as I said, we are very much going further back. It is an essential part of our research, in my view, but if the committee is not prepared to go there, then that is that.

The well-baby clinic program in England, for example, has some fundamental points as to how it integrates with what we call three different ministries, which they have overcome. They have it down to two, but they have a continuum. I am familiar with that.

Mrs Nichols: Besides, when you have a baby in England, you really do not care about that at all. I mean, you just go to the well-baby clinic.

I had my first child in England, and I had worked in a paediatric unit in a hospital, but it still did not give me the right not to go to the clinic. The public health nurse turned up and said, "Mrs Nichols, we didn't see you at the clinic last week, was Sarah sick? I said, 'No, I just didn't come.'" Well, that was not good enough.

It seems to me, though, to answer your question in terms of what needs to happen, those hospitals that do have a child development clinic that is fully staffed and functioning are able to offer services in their community that are second

to none, and those are the Hospital for Sick Children, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and some others. I know that the mandate of hospitals is such that in order to be a fully accredited hospital, in theory you are supposed to have a child development clinic. Many hospitals do not. You do not have to have it in every hospital, of course, but it seems to me that if in every community there was an appropriately staffed child development clinic which overlaps paediatrics and paediatric neurology and developmental paediatrics and psychology and public health and so on, we would go a long way towards offering the kinds of services that could help.

Again, Richard made the point that hospitals are very expensive. There is no question about it, it is very expensive. But with a child development clinic and then doing outreach, like the travelling team from the Hospital for Sick Children, for example, I think we would begin to offer the kind of services throughout this province that families, I feel, are entitled to, because you are quite right, if a baby is born at the 26-week period of gestation and survives, that family has some expectations. Perhaps nobody ever bothered to explain to them that that baby may very well grow into a child with all kinds of problems. It may cost \$150,000 to bring the baby to the stage that he can go home and then, wham, that vacuum and the parent has to get on with it, and that is very, very hard.

Mr Jackson: But compare that to the \$50,000 to \$60,000 of special education grant focused dollars that may not be working, to be brutally honest—

Mrs Nichols: Or the \$50,000 a year for jails.

Mr Jackson: —each year for all that time.

Mrs Nichols: No question.

Mr Jackson: You have a very important message and I just hope that we are able to bring it into focus with this report and contextually we can bring it in. I wish we had more time. Thank you very much.

The Chair: So do I. I just wanted to point out to the other witnesses who are waiting that, just through the process, we did start late and I tried to give a balance and that is why we are a little bit delayed. I have two more speakers, if I could move along with them, please.

Mrs O'Neill: I have been most interested in many of the questions that have been posed up to this point. Some of mine on points 4 and 5 of your recommendations have been covered. We have not looked at number 9 yet, and I am wondering

if you could say a bit more about what you are trying to achieve through that recommendation.

1120

Mrs Nichols: It has been made very clear to us that when a child is identified as being at risk—is having difficulties, for example, in a day care centre, or if a child is identified at the Hospital for Sick Children child development clinic as being at risk, may even be formally labelled as having a learning disability, although sometimes that does not happen—that information does not appear to impact the programming when that child is enrolled in school. It is not that the information is not shared at all, because I know that the family will pass it on, but somehow it seems that as the child moves from one physical location to the next one, the information does not seem to go along, on the grounds that we do not want to be prejudiced, we do not want to be predisposed to all kinds of things.

As a result, first of all, the family has to go through the same kind of things over and over again, and second, there are long delays when the person is waiting for services while there is a whole new round of assessment.

Transitional stages are the stages when the child goes home from the hospital and then into the day care and then from day care into school, and then even the change from elementary school to secondary school, secondary to post-secondary. Each time, for somebody who has some unusual needs, it seems as if the wheel has to be reinvented all over again.

In terms of the young child in particular, people, say, at the Hospital for Sick Children child development clinic are quite frustrated and are very vocal about it that they make specific recommendations around a child who has a neurological problem who is going to be enrolled in school and the school says, "Well, that's medical opinion, now we need an educational opinion," and round we go again.

So when we are talking about enhancing the communication, there should be some kind of a mandated situation that the information be considered before deciding where to go. I accept that the school system does not want to label children at the junior kindergarten level as being at risk, because indeed the child may just be a late bloomer, we certainly understand that, but where there is very clear-cut medical evidence that this child's developmental level is not where it should be and that these are the various things that need to happen, it does seem too bad that the child has to fail all over again before something happens.

We had a meeting of our educational policy and legislation committee yesterday where we were discussing the fact that more and more school boards in the province are adopting something again from public law 94-142 which talks about two chronological years' delay before being considered for intervention. It is fine to say that if at age 9 suddenly somebody says, "Is this child really having difficulties?" and if the child is reading at an age 8 level perhaps that does not mean very much, but where a child comes along with information saying that the child indeed has problems, why do we have to wait until he has formally failed twice before we can offer any kind of intervention? That really is what we were getting at.

Mrs O'Neill: Where would you mandate this or how would you mandate this? Would it have to become part of the Education Act?

Mrs Nichols: I think I would like to see it in the Education Act. You know, when the whole business of early identification first came about—you were a trustee at that time, and so was I, and we were all looking at the Windsor project and saying, what can we learn from that?—I remember there was a lot of discussion at that time about, did they take into enough account what was found out in other places? Then, certainly when my board went on to develop its own early identification process, it was stated, "No, we're not interested in all that kind of stuff, we'll sort of start again."

Well, that four-year-old is not a born-again four-year-old, that four-year old is coming along with all the things that have gone before, all the developmental lags or advances or physical problems or whatever else the child is bringing along. It really does seem kind of strange to say that we will wipe the slate clean and we will start again.

Mrs O'Neill: Say we have an IPRC in grade 1. I am not sure if they even take place in senior kindergarten. Do they bring forward as witnesses or evidence things that happened pre-entry into that system on a general basis?

Mrs Ziraldo: Not on a general basis. Sometimes they do. There is a program in York region right now with the public school board where they have what is called a special needs kindergarten. They set it up with the day care and the special ed team from the board goes around to the day care centres and talks. They have a team that is set up and it is excellent. They have been doing this now for I think the second year. That is sort of a start of having that transition there. It is something you might want to look at.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do they have a protocol that is written down? That might suggest how various boards approach this whole matter. Is there a protocol which says where they go, because there are the private and the public day cares, etc?

Mrs Ziraldo: No. It is basically, you know, if you are aware of it and you have to do public awareness so the school boards go out and let you know and that there is a special needs coordinator at the preschool level. In a lot of cases, the information might be shared but totally ignored. The child, again, as Eva has said, has to go over the testing again. When I am dealing with new people, I am still asked, and my son is 14 years old: "When did he first walk? When did he first speak?" That is a constant thing.

The material is there. Why can we not have something mandated that as a team you have—the parent is the person who stays for ever, hopefully, and he or she is one person and they should respect what that parent is saying—but perhaps we need to have a team approach during the transitional years that will be mandated, that you have an educator. Sometimes from the elementary to the secondary they will say, "Well, there are no longer learning disabilities." All of a sudden we are cured at elementary and we move on to secondary.

That could be the same way when you go through the preschool level. You know, we have done all this infant stimulation, everything seems to be going along fine—

Mr Jackson: We must be destreaming.

Mrs Ziraldo: Yes. We no longer have a learning disability. I mean, it is like saying someone is degifted.

I just think that it is not a general rule and in some boards they are doing a great job of accepting the information and working on those recommendations. In other boards they are ignoring that and ignoring that input.

The Chair: I have a little bit of difficulty here. I know the protocol is approximately equal time between the opposition and the government, and I got only—

Mr Jackson: It is equal time among the three political parties.

The Chair: Well, okay, that is—

Mr Jackson: I want to make sure that does not stay on the record.

The Chair: Well, okay, you understand this slightly differently than we do, but—

Mr Jackson: Because we have three different approaches on many educational interests.

The Chair: I do understand that. I do have one more speaker, Dave, if you could be succinct about it so that we do not keep our other delegates waiting.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Unless our delegates have to leave, if we can, we should have flexibility.

The Chair: Right. I am being very flexible, I believe, and I want to make sure we roll along here, please.

Mr Neumann: Mr Chair, you realize that I have certainly had my time with other presenters and a lot of the questions that I asked of those other presenters I am just delighted to note that you have raised in your presentation, and a lot of the questions that have been asked would be questions that I would have asked, so I will not be very long.

I simply want to commend you very much. I think parent associations of a variety of types bring a great deal to issues like this.

Based on questions that I asked yesterday of Susanne Eden from the Ontario Association for Deans of Education, I wanted to know whether you have had any contact with that association, because it seems to me that there could be some excellent results from a liaison between your group and that group.

Mrs Nichols: No, we have not. We have had extensive liaison with the Ontario Council on University Affairs and also with the presidents' team at the community college level, but not the deans of the faculty of education. I did not in fact know that they had a group, so we appreciate that information. Contact with the faculties of education has been rather ad hoc, to put it mildly. Faculty at the University of Toronto and York University, just because of where they are and where our provincial office is, do call upon us and some of the others call upon our chapters.

Mr Neumann: To save time, I might suggest that, as you know, this is all printed in Hansard. You may want to look at the discussion that took place when they were in yesterday.

I also want to commend you for raising the importance of the role of the public health nurses, because I have been asking questions on that and stimulating some responses from other groups. I certainly feel that public health nurses have a great role to play and have played a role which has been underrecognized.

I was speaking with a retired public health nurse from our community last night who said that one of the problems was that where they had identified problems, perhaps the education sys-

tem did not respect their findings as much as they should have. Do you have any comment on that?

1130

Mrs Nichols: I think that it is certainly very true. The role of the public health nurse within the school system is very limited. There always seems to be 10,000 other things that they are supposed to be doing rather than spending time in the schools. I think it is a great shame, because in terms of quite a bit of educational things—in the area of guidance, in the area of family studies, in the area of health studies—public health could bring a tremendous amount to the game. In fact, sometimes having a new person speaking to the students would be very helpful. I think that it is a resource that we are very much ignoring.

Even where the role of the Ministry of Health has been mandated through things like Memo 81 and the home care program, it is interesting what is happening there, where the Ministry of Health's involvement is being withdrawn and various services that have been delivered through Ministry of Health personnel are being handed over to the Ministry of Education.

That really is not in the best interests of the child. On previous occasions we, along with lots of other people, have put forward the need for a ministry of the child, and we always have a little chuckle at that one, but honestly, that really is perhaps where it is at, because from the point of view of that child, whether it is the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities or the Ministry of Education does not matter.

Mr Neumann: That ends my comments. I just want to say that I share so many of the concerns that you have and would want to ask many questions. I will just conclude by saying I am just delighted with the emphasis you have on the very early identification and the issue of prevention where possible.

The Chair: I very much appreciated your comments. I have some very personal experience with learning disabilities and I appreciate very much the work you have done to this point. I obviously know that at least two of you identified yourselves as being parents in that situation. I found it a very thought-provoking presentation. I very much appreciate the time, and thank you again.

Mrs Nichols: Thank you very much for your time.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As our next group comes up, could I just make a couple of requests?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One would be if we can get the information on the approach that is being taken in terms of the special ed team that goes out to the day cares or the junior kindergarten system in York, I think it was. If we could get some information about how they operate, that would be good.

I wonder if the ministry officials can also find out for us where there are existing protocols or guidelines about how kids enter junior kindergarten and what kind of screening is done on various boards around the province. That would be very interesting information for us to get, to see what is available there. It may be that the best way to deal with that is to notify the association of boards that we would like that information when it comes, to give us some sort of canvass.

Mrs O'Neill: In conjunction with that, would we be able to see—surely almost every board has the home visits, and in connection with that, a visit to the public health. At least, that is the experience I have in my community, but surely that is not unique.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think we should find out. I think we need to know how many just have sort of the basic home visit, what the elements of that are, what they are looking for and how many are follow-up teams that do something which is more systematic with various groups and day cares and that kind of thing. It would be just interesting to see the process.

The Chair: For clarification, we are looking at the public health visitation process to see what kinds of things they are identifying. I know on our board of health it would be perhaps different than others, so just to get that protocol, sure.

Mrs O'Neill: In conjunction with the presentation, if they have certain questions—I know on one board I deal with, it has a set of questions. Perhaps we could even get that.

The Chair: Yes.

Mrs Ziraldo: Actually, I have one from when I was at York public health. I went through their assessments and added lots of other questions they could ask. They basically only have 15 minutes when they do their preschool assessments. That is basically what they told me. It is about 10 or 15 minutes. In most cases it is a one-page assessment when they are doing preschool assessment, just before they go into kindergarten.

Mrs O'Neill: They only have 15 minutes with each child?

Mrs Ziraldo: You got it.

The Chair: Excuse me, just staying on that, we would not be able to pick you up on that by-play. If you could deal with that, that has been the request and if we could do that, we would appreciate that. Further information required?

Mr R. F. Johnston: The other thing is from yesterday's presentations around the faculties of education. I would really like to get an idea of what is being offered in course work and some idea of what the reading requirements are. I would like some notion of the hours that are being spent. I was really surprised we did not get that yesterday. I would really hope maybe the ministry officials can dig out some of that from the various faculties for us. I think those are the two things I thought of.

The Chair: There has been a point of order requested and I am going to entertain that after the next presentation, because we have kept them for a period of time. Depending on the presentation, this may necessitate a slight change in our leaving for Ryerson.

I would ask the Association for Bright Children to come forward. While they are getting settled, we are trying to work out a steering committee meeting, based on some of the information we are asking for, for tomorrow at some point, and we are still working on that. If you cannot make it, we will try to work that out this afternoon. I think we sense that there is some more information we want and we have to try to have some presentations or arrange for other folks to be here. We just wanted a slight half-hour meeting some time either at lunch tomorrow or afterwards.

Welcome. Again, our apologies for keeping you late a bit, but I think you can understand by the dialogue the vital interest that the committee has in the whole subject. We appreciate your patience. Perhaps you could introduce yourselves and take the floor.

ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN

Mrs Walker: I would like to introduce myself first of all. I am Margaret Walker, the provincial president of the Association for Bright Children. I feel like an old friend coming back in among this group. It is very nice to be here and have the opportunity to present again.

On my left is Estelle Payne, who is the special education advisory committee co-ordinator for our provincial association, and she is also a representative of ABC on the York region separate school special education advisory com-

mittee. On my right is Terri Beaman, who is a member of the Etobicoke chapter and has in the past been the president of that chapter and is currently the SEAC representative on the Etobicoke board.

You have in your packages our brief for today. I will go over that as usual and make a few comments. I have also included our latest Newsmagazine, and one of the reasons I did that is that there is an attitude survey in the middle which is rather interesting, and the responses we are getting back from parents in terms of programming and the needs of their children. If the committee would like, we will ensure that a copy of the results is sent to the committee when that survey is completed.

As Mrs Nichols of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario mentioned and I definitely want to mention, we are very pleased with the last report and some of the comments that were made and the recommendations in that. It is just so heartening to know that there is a committee here that we can come and talk to, we can dialogue with. We know that many of our concerns are expressed through your reports and we certainly hope the ministry will be taking serious consideration of those recommendations.

As you are aware, we are an organization of parents. The comments I will be making are coming from our past position papers, some of which you have: our position paper on primary education, and certainly the report on the questionnaire we did concerning programs and services for bright and gifted kids in the province. I have also included one copy of our response to the early primary education project that was done in 1986, and you may want to take a look at it. I think there is only copy at the present time, but if you want more, they are available.

Our comments fall into several areas and I will just go through them briefly.

The first, of course, is the preschool child. As was mentioned in the previous comments, as parents we are with the children lifelong. There are many things that happen with and to our children from an early age and it is important that we are listened to as parents.

Some of the questions come from parents whose children are in day care programs. We are pleased that many of the day care workers, because of their knowledge of child development, are certainly aware that some of our bright and gifted kids do require something different. They are aware of our association in some cases and pass the suggestion on to parents to contact

us. As was mentioned before, there is not always enough time for us to be involved in some of those early childhood education courses and it seems to be at the whim of the individual teachers whether we are invited.

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Under the heading "The preschool gifted child," on the second page, I have just listed a few characteristics that have been identified through the literature, but also other characteristics that parents have talked to us about.

I think one of the important things we have to remember is that gifted kids come from all ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and we have to be very careful that we do not eliminate any children.

Many of our children are reading before they enter school. We have parents who call who are very concerned because their children are reading at two and a half. They are very concerned about that because it does not seem normal. The thing is that these parents attempt sometimes not to teach or to hold the kids back, and that is very difficult, because these children then react in other ways.

The vocabularies they have are extremely sophisticated. We hear of kids who are very young being able to carry on conversations with adults and keep their attention for a long period of time.

As parents, we know there is a "terrible twos" time with many children in terms of a lot of "why" questions. For many of us as parents, that insatiable curiosity goes on for much longer and it sometimes gets very trying. It also gets trying for those teachers who have them in either early childhood or kindergarten and primary classes as well.

Their ability to make associations and understand concepts is really quite intriguing. I just assumed that all children could do that and our daughter was one. When my younger child asked for information and I attempted to explain, as only mothers do, she would interrupt and say, "Look, Sean, this is the way it is," and take a concept that he knew and be able to transfer it to the one that he was questioning about, something that I was unable to do, but they can do it and they can help others.

They are quite aware, and we have talked I think in this area about the sensitivity these kids have to the environment and to other children. It really is quite incredible and it begins at a very young age.

And of course there is their memory. I always thought it was just because I had more in my

brain file than my children did, but I have decided that is not true. They certainly have an awful lot of information that I may never have.

Preschool is an important time, and many of our kids are in day care settings, as you talked about and mentioned earlier, some formalized and some less formalized, so it is important that we, as parents, always have communication with those people.

As our children progress into kindergarten, again as was mentioned, the information needs to come from the other settings into the school situation. ABC is very concerned that kindergarten continue to be an area where children explore and learn.

Maybe most of you have read this book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. I just think this is wonderful, and I remind parents of this and I also often remind secondary teachers of this fact. If I can just read:

"Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sand pile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

"Share everything:

"Play fair:

"Don't hit people:

"Put things back where you found them:

"Clean up your own mess:

"Don't take things that aren't yours:

"Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody:

"Wash your hands before you eat:

"Flush:

"Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you:

"Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some:

"Take a nap every afternoon:

"When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together; be aware of wonder."

I think all of us need to remember this. The book is by Robert Fulghum and it really is quite a nice read if you have not had a chance to take a look at it.

We have noticed that the speech from the throne indicated that there will be full-day kindergarten and there are some issues and concerns around that that we would like to express.

I think one of the areas is that we have to know what that full-day kindergarten is going to be about. It will be very important that both teachers

and particularly parents do not get expectations that because there is going to be full-day kindergarten and junior kindergarten for all children, that means somehow that all the formalized reading and writing has to start then. I think it will be important how those guidelines are put forward and how things happen, because we are aware that although some gifted kids are reading before they go into school, some gifted kids are not, but many children are not and we cannot put some of those pressures on them for that sort of information at the kindergarten level.

In terms of the primary area and those children who are gifted in the primary level, our survey, which we did two years ago almost now, indicates that those are the most neglected children that we have in terms of gifted kids. They are underserved and the problem is that some of them will begin to underachieve if their needs are not being met.

Parents report to us that principals or teachers will hesitate or even refuse to conduct an IPRC at the primary level, and certainly at the kindergarten level, because there is not a program in place. Most parents are not looking for a placement in a self-contained class, although there are boards that do provide that because they recognize it as the best option for those kids, but what they are wanting to do is ensure that the needs of the child are identified and that modifications and differentiation of the program is put into place.

I think we have to be sure that we find out that gifted kids, and there are other exceptionalities as well, do not become gifted or exceptional at grade 4. They also do not become de-exceptionalized at grade 9 because things have been cured.

Some of our gifted kids do get identified at the primary level, but it is unfortunate that those are the kids with behaviour problems. The ones who withdraw we do not get. They become the underachievers.

On page 3 we have listed the three positions that we have in terms of primary education. These came out of a primary position paper that was written after we responded to the early primary education project.

We certainly are looking for child-centred education in the primary grades. It needs to respect and accommodate each child's abilities, interests, acquired knowledge and skills. I think it is extremely important that we take a look at those.

We also support an integrated approach to the teaching of material and to per-pupil progress through the primary. Much of that came through

some of the recommendations in the early primary education project. I have always loved this because of the tumbling kids on the front cover. On page 31 in the EPEP report they talk about continuity and flexibility for children going through the primary level.

We are also very concerned about the early and ongoing identification of pupil development, and the recommendations are of course made in EPEP in terms of early identification.

I want to deal a little bit with early admission to school and acceleration. We get a lot of calls from parents who are very concerned about what ABC's stand is in terms of acceleration and early entry for some kids.

We believe that it has to be done on an individual basis. There are some kids for whom it may be appropriate that they get into kindergarten, or perhaps it is grade 1, at an earlier age than six because they are ready in all respects of their development. It just cannot be at the intellectual or academic. We think it is really important that we take a look at that. Again, EPEP has mentioned that in its report.

Many of the young gifted children come to school with just an insatiable desire to learn, and sometimes—not always, because we know there are many situations where it is positive—these kids are made to conform and their progress is restricted because they are in a program that must be lockstep. The concern is that for those children it is an inappropriate education and they begin to underachieve.

There is an article I have quoted here from Roeper Review which talks about those children who do begin to underachieve. It certainly robs them of their opportunity to reach their full potential, but we are never sure about what it robs, in terms of society, in what they can do. Our association is hesitant and has always not said that we have to educate these kids because they will be our future, but that is part of the reality. If they get an appropriate education and are happy within themselves, they will be productive individuals in the future, and we do not know what benefit that will be for society, but if their learning is somehow stifled or they begin to underachieve, in actual fact their growth is retarded.

1150

That happens. By the time a child turns six, the attitudes and behaviours in terms of underachievement are there. That is really quite frightening, because if it does not start to turn around, the literature and the research in that Roeper Review suggest that if they get to middle

elementary school, underachievement is so entrenched and such a lifestyle that changes require major adjustments and counselling.

I guess that is one of the reasons that I am involved in this association. Our oldest daughter was an underachiever. She was in a gifted program, but because of her early childhood education just chose not to achieve. I thought I had recognized it, but the teachers and I were not communicating about that. They did not want to talk about underachievement. When it was finally recognized, when she was in grade 7, by a very astute teacher, she warned me that it could be until she was in grade 10 or 11 before she ever began to achieve. In actual fact, she did not begin to achieve. It was not until she was in grade 10 that she began to get close to 80 per cent.

Many gifted kids do not get 80 per cent. They must be achieving, there must be the higher marks. She is now at university and still continuing on that achievement thing, but I have great pains for her because of that, because she had to suffer. She has had to grow to learn that she is okay and that achieving is all right. It is very difficult, because that begins so early and many teachers do not recognize it.

Again, the ongoing identification is really important.

If we go on to French immersion, some boards in the province—not all—are still suggesting that French immersion is an alternative program which is appropriate and should be considered to be gifted education. We do not believe that it is an alternative. It is an important option and a valuable option for many students, in appearance, but it is extremely important that if they are going to remain in French immersion there is some gifted programming within that French immersion program as well.

Some boards do provide it. I talked to some people in North York last night and they were very concerned because their children who were in French immersion are asked either to remain in French immersion or to opt into a gifted program and there is not the combination. It is extremely important and we are looking at some of the research in that area as well, because that is a concern.

Teachers: We always have to come to the teachers, whether they are the early childhood educators or other teachers in our schools. They are the key. They are the ones who deal directly with our children and for whom we have to provide support in any ways that we can.

Faculties of education have a great responsibility and I sometimes worry that they are not

really up to date and ready to roll with political changes that may be coming. We have talked, at least with York University, in terms of some of the changes that may occur and what it is doing to help its teachers. We are very concerned.

We also offer, as much as possible, to go into classes and talk from a parental perspective, to talk about identification, to talk about anything they would like to in terms of gifted education when they are doing their special education. But again, it depends on the teacher and the person who is leading the course. It is unfortunate, and the research is not always there.

We wanted to touch on the wonderful new initiatives, the action plan in restructuring education. It was announced in April, and many of us were terribly distraught because we really did not know what it meant. We kept hearing rumours from hither and yon and wondered, how soon is there going to be destreaming of grade 9?

Getting down to the kindergarten, what are the issues there?

We were pleased that we were invited to the meeting with the minister and the deputy minister in December and had an opportunity to take a look at it and know that we will have opportunities for input, but we are really concerned in two areas.

Nowhere—well, there is one. Special education is mentioned on the last page beside David McKee's name, but there is no one on any of the work teams looking at the restructuring of education who is from the special education and provincial schools branch or represents exceptional children. I think there is a great need for us not to separate them completely, because we do need to know that education and special education are together—not always one and the same thing, but they are integral and together. So we are very concerned about that.

The other is that on the advisory council for the learning—I can never remember the name of the organization—there are 40 members and there is one parent representative. There was also a student, who was at the presentation of the minister and the deputy minister, who said: "What about us students? We are not represented here anywhere. Are you going to listen to us? Can we make recommendations?" That is something else I hope the secretariat will be looking at.

We have to be careful with the way those are structured. We see that the early years are taken away from the formative years. There is a real need for a link between the kindergarten and the primary program. I am not sure, when I look at it, whether there should not be a stronger link there

than between the primary and the junior. There have to be links all the way along, and some of our recommendations reflect the need for linkage of those. We certainly are concerned and will be, as much as possible, making presentations to make our comments known about the restructuring.

On the final page we have listed eight recommendations and I would like to read them just briefly.

The first is that ABC recommends that boards identify all exceptional pupils as early as possible and provide programs to meet the strengths and needs of each child.

Second, ABC recommends that the Ministry of Education encourage and monitor boards to ensure that there are services for gifted pupils at the primary level.

Third, ABC recommends that the recommendations of the early primary education project about movement through the primary program be considered.

Fourth, ABC recommends that the Ministry of Education review the research and practice in Ontario schools and provide some guidelines for early admission to school.

I think those could be some really interesting items.

Fifth, we recommend that the ministry review the research and the practice in Ontario schools and provide some guidelines for acceleration. In the responses in our research, we found that most boards say they offer acceleration, but there were not particularly any guidelines. I think it is important that we take a look at some of those.

Sixth, ABC recommends that the Ministry of Education ensure that French immersion programs are not provided as an alternative to the provision of gifted programs. Of course, in addition to that, where appropriate, there should be gifted programming for those pupils in French immersion who require it.

Seventh, ABC recommends that the learning program secretariat recognize that the needs of exceptional children must be included in all of the policy development. The secretariat must ensure that the concerns of parents are heard as well.

Eighth, ABC recommends that the work teams and the plan to restructure education ensure that dialogue and exchange occur between teams as well as the rest of the community out there.

I want to make the comment that all these things we have talked about have to do with French-language schools as well as English-language schools. We are not talking only about

those English schools, we are talking for and represent parents of both the languages we have in the province.

I would like to ask if either of my colleagues have comments they would like to make and then we could open it up for questions as well.

Mrs Beaman: There are some areas that Margaret has spoken about that I would like to enhance. Earlier you were discussing teacher training with respect to special education. I can only endorse what the learning disabilities association said. Very often there are excellent ideas and excellent programs, particularly centring around the child-centred active learning programs at the primary level, but unfortunately, the teachers have not been given the tools or mechanisms to be able to apply them easily within their own classrooms. I think this is very essential to all young children so that they can progress at a rate that is appropriate for them.

At the same time, I think there can be more effective uses in the schools of facilities such as the resource centres. The technology that we want our children to have achieved by the time they finish their secondary school education has to start, really, at a very early age. Certainly in many boards children are involved in computer familiarity and programming and so on, which can be used whether a child has a learning problem or whether a child just simply needs to know that he needs to be familiar with the new technology we have everywhere or whether it is to enhance something they are already doing in the classroom.

Also, with teacher training again, I think we cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of teaching teachers to identify problems or learning development situations that they see, even at early ages within the classroom.

1200

The Chair: Thank you very much. I have two speakers identified; I am sure there will be others.

Mrs O'Neill: I would certainly like to begin by congratulating you on how up to date you are about the development of policies within the Ministry of Education and your input there; that is very helpful. You likely had that document before we did. We just got it when we began this process. I do think that your comments regarding the thrust you hope will develop there would happen.

I also like your challenge regarding guidelines for early admission and acceleration. Surely there must be some in this province somewhere—we do not know of them, but it would seem to me

that some board somewhere must have talked about that, or at least some school principals must have.

I would just like to try to clarify for you your statement regarding kindergarten. We had a very long discussion about that the day we began when we entertained the ministry officials. I think it would be better, at least at this time, if you understood the government's position.

We want full-day kindergarten, and you are suggesting this should be provided. We are suggesting that boards that consider they have room for it provide it, so it is not nearly as mandated as I think your brief suggests. We do not know how many boards are going to do that. They will be the ones who will determine the space. That may be done in different ways. We are suggesting, however, that they do it by 1994. They may choose some boards to offer half-day programs in senior kindergarten as well as full-day programs, depending upon the communities. Certainly in larger centres, we see that that could be a possibility. The mandating of the four-year-old kindergarten is there, true, again, hopefully to be implemented by 1992. In all those cases, however, the Education Act stays as is, and that is compulsory entry at 6 years of age.

I think that those are important points that we have to get out. They have not been enunciated very clearly. We had quite a bit of trouble getting them enunciated clearly, but we now have them in Hansard—I re-read them yesterday—and I think that the ministry will stand by what its officials said in this committee. The boards, I hope, will partake in much consultation with the ministry and hence they themselves will participate, with their parents and staff, in the consultation of how this will and should come about. There is really lots of room for flexibility in the program. Hopefully, some exciting things might happen, and we may have a part in that with our recommendations.

Mr Neumann: Thank you for the presentation; I found it most interesting.

Have there been any studies done that you are aware of about the tradeoffs that occur for children who are accelerated beyond their peer age range? I am interested in this because we have two girls who were accelerated. They are now in university. I did not notice any perceptible disadvantages to the acceleration, but I wondered if there have been any studies.

Mrs Walker: Yes. Dr Daniel Keating, who is at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, was very involved prior to coming to Ontario with the studies on mathematically precocious youth at

Johns Hopkins University in the United States. Much of the research dealing with gifted kids is very positive in terms of acceleration.

I have to beg off, because I am not sure. I think we have to look at each individual case, but it is extremely important.

There are those students who are at university at a young age. Margaret Carter, who has been before this committee in other situations, has a grade 5 son who will soon be attending some of the first-year university calculus courses at the University of Guelph, and he will probably fit right in. He is just little, but he will be right up there.

For some it is appropriate, but it is big concern and I think it is something that we need more information on, and it certainly has to be on an individual basis. I know our daughter was accelerated and there were things such as the academic progress, but also there had to be a look at the social and emotional growth and those sorts of things, and I think it is extremely important. As an association, we say, "Look at each child individually, but—

Mr Neumann: Is this what you were referring to when you talk about the need for guidelines?

Mrs Walker: Yes. There has to be something set out for both parents and principals to take a look at, because I think they do need to know that there are some cases where it may be appropriate and some other circumstances where it would not be.

Mr Neumann: What comments do you have with regard to the relationship and the liaison between the day care component of early childhood education and the kindergarten? We have been asking all groups to comment on that and the communication that does exist or should exist between those two components and how they might be better integrated.

Mrs Walker: There obviously is a need for integration. It appears from the parents that we deal with that most of the information that goes from the day care centre to the school is via the parents. It is again that need for a consulting teamwork approach and taking a look at it together. That would certainly be very beneficial when children are going into kindergarten from being in that situation.

Mrs Beaman: If I can add there, I think there is a further problem with gifted children in that situation in that most boards of education do not provide any service anyway until grade 4, so it does not matter what the day care says because no

one is going to listen to them in junior or senior kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, grade 3.

When parents call to ask for advice and guidance, "What should I do with my child who is four years old" and doing whatever, they are told, "Well, I'm sorry, in my board there is identification at the grade 2 level." "So, what do I do?" "Well, you have to wait and you have to provide enrichment outside of the school."

That is fine where you have a family that is very involved, but we all know that that is the problem now. So many people do not have the time or the expertise to devote to children who have any type of exceptionality or problem. So there is a very severe lag and this is why we are focusing on the problem of students who become underachievers.

What are you doing to those children who have had a child-centred, activity-based program in nursery school, or even in many junior and senior kindergartens? You put them in a grade 1 class and they are ignored. How would you feel all day long in this committee when you put your hand up to ask a question and you get a nod but everybody said, "We know you know the answer, so we're not going to give you the chance, again today, to give the answer"?

The Chair: You should see me in action.

Mrs Beaman: Right.

Mr Payne: One of the difficulties is that boards that are looking at the nursery school elements seem to ignore the gifted as being a special-needs group. They look at the other exceptionalities, but in terms of a developmentally advanced student, that does not seem to come into that realm.

Mr Neumann: One final question deals with the area of the growing multicultural diversity of our province. Has your association done any work in the area of perhaps helping to identify gifted kids whose potential strong area may be masked by their lack of English knowledge? Do you have representation in your association of people from the immigrant population and so on?

Mrs Walker: Certainly within the general membership, yes; there are members. The unfortunate thing is that probably the one community that is not well represented is the black population. We know there are gifted people who are black, but they are not always identified in schools, it seems. Disproportionate numbers are.

In terms of that, we are very concerned in terms of the immigrant population. Our request to boards when they are identifying children is to

make sure that they do not use tests that are culturally biased. Many of them are. Many of them are sex biased as well. There are a lot of things, so we are saying: "Please don't use only one method of identifying these children. Take a look at all of the factors and make sure that you listen to parents, and if there is any doubt, do some more working together and hopefully they are on a side that you will identify them where it is necessary." Yes, we are very concerned.

1210

Mr Neumann: In terms of the biased tests, I suppose that would apply too in trying to identify the bright kids whose brightness might be masked by a learning disability or some physiologically based neurological problem.

Mrs Walker: Right. We are in the process right now of responding to the ministry in terms of the definitions of the exceptionalities. We have not quite sorted out exactly how it will be, but we are very concerned about those children who have dual exceptionalities, the children who are learning disabled and gifted.

There was some mention that some learning-disabled children, and others, will not be identified unless they are two years behind. If you have a gifted learning-disabled child, he may be at least at grade level, if not more, but he has a very specific learning disability that needs to be identified and that is not happening. We are very concerned about that.

There is one superintendent in this province who continues to say to me: "All I say to parents is, 'Choose. Do you want them gifted or do you want them to be learning disabled?'" I think I have mentioned that before to this committee. It is terrible. We continue to discuss, but, yes, it is a real concern.

Mr Neumann: It is like the other battle of, do they go into the behaviour class or into the learning-disabled class?

Mrs Beaman: Or the gifted, if behavioural and gifted, "We won't put them in there," because, again, with the ratios that are mandated for gifted programming at 25 to 1, most boards will chock-a-block fill them up right there, "That's it, that's our class at 25 to 1."

When you start then introducing children who have dual exceptionalities, behavioural-gifted or LD-gifted, it is a terrible strain for that teacher, who already has 24 or 25 children who are all working at a very high and very demanding rate, all in different directions. You put someone in there who is bouncing around hitting kids, or very withdrawn, and how are you going to have

the time to work with that child when you have a 25-to-1 ratio? I think that is something we also need to look at, in view of the primary recommendations for grade 1, grade 2, grade 3. Maybe if you are going to put a smaller ratio there, in some of the exceptional areas that also has to be considered.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your—you have questions, yes?

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is the problem of being ignored, as you were talking about before. It does not happen often. It was nicely done, neatly brought out.

Mrs Walker: Excellent.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Of course, the other economic reality in that scenario is that it does not cost the board any more to have the 25-to-1 ratio with a bright kid, but if you start to pull out those who have the other kinds of problems, then it starts to cost them. Their special ed money actually starts to disappear into special ed money rather than into straight regular costs.

Mrs Walker: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A very good brief; I enjoyed it a lot. I think that we should not wait to put into our recommendations the request that you were asking about, the reviews of research and practices. I think we should ask that now of the ministry people, and if they cannot come through with that information, then we will put it into our report, but it seems to me that we should be able to get some kind of an idea at the moment about what the practice is for early admission and what the practices are for acceleration. Certainly a research search can be done on that as well. I think it will be added to the list of things that we want from the ministry now, and if it turns to be something that the information is not there on, then we can make that part of our recommendations as we go through.

I have only one question, because I basically accept your recommendations and your analysis. I sometimes have difficulty with bright kids' advocates. It is that there is a fairly elitist attitude, but then I do not find that at all within your positions here around this section.

I think that in the continuum notion from JK through to the end of grade 3, at least, there is a lot of flexibility that can be built in for the brighter child. That is something that you talked about and I think we need to as well.

One of the things you did not talk about, and I would just like to get some comments on it, which was raised by somebody yesterday—I cannot remember which witness—was the idea of

using mentoring by older brighter students with their peers. It was raised in the unfortunate context of using that to deal with the class size problem. You know, if you have 25 students, then you could use the bright kids to deal with the slower ones to help the teacher. I would not want it used in that way, but I wonder if you could make some comments about mentoring, which you have not mentioned here particularly, in terms of the use to the bright child as well as to the other students.

Mrs Walker: I think there are situations right now where bright children are being used as teachers. I have a great deal of difficulty with that, because the mandate is to educate all children to their potential. If in actual fact we are using those children to educate others, then that is an inappropriate opportunity for them for their learning.

I do believe that there has to be sharing, and there is a lot of co-operative small-group learning and things like that where that interaction goes back and forth, but I think we have to be careful what we mean by mentoring.

I think as well that if I had a child who was being taught or mentored by an older child, a bright child, I am not sure how much I would appreciate that either, because that child is not gifted or able, perhaps, to teach. They do not have the instructional strategies and they do not have all the information. I think it is important that teachers do the appropriate teaching.

Yes, in terms of mentoring, peer tutoring, there are a lot of ways that it can be done and done well to the benefit of everyone; to all of the children in the class and in the relationship.

I do not know whether you have seen in this committee the document that was done collaboratively by the six Metro boards on co-operative small-group learning?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not think so, not as a committee.

Mrs Walker: Ron Wideman, who was with the Scarborough Board of Education and is now in values, or religious education, or whatever the terminology is at the ministry now, was involved in that project. It was done co-operatively by the boards, with very much a values-based emphasis, and it will be going into production as well and being sold throughout the province. It is a good document and you might want to get hold of it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will try to get that. I think those are very important caveats around mentoring.

Mrs Walker: I think the co-operative small-group learning is appropriate but we cannot use peer tutoring as a way to look after the needs of gifted kids. They need education. They need teaching.

The Chair: Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for a very fine presentation. We appreciate your taking the time to come before our committee. Again, we apologize for the late start, but I think we have covered the waterfront.

Mrs Walker: We understand and wait, and it is okay, because we are working for kids.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Okay, a couple of procedural things. First, we have moved our leave time from here to a quarter to two. We could not go any later because the person we are meeting has another committee at 2:30, so it is going to be a little jammed. We said a quarter to two because it is not that far. Some of us are making our own way down there and we will meet.

Interjection.

The Chair: Probably about an hour and a half in total, so it will be about 3:30 or thereabouts, but again, you might want to keep an eye on the clock, and if you have to leave, then I think everybody would understand that and appreciate that.

We have a point of order being asked for by a member of the committee.

Ms Poole: I would like to raise a point of order. I can appreciate that we have always had a fair amount of flexibility and leeway in making personal comments on the committee. However, I am very concerned by a comment that was made this morning by the member for Burlington South.

Mr Jackson cited the instance of a premature child who was blind in one eye and followed this by what I felt was a very sweeping statement that three quarters of the hospitals in the province would have left this child to die. I would officially request that Mr Jackson table for the committee documentation substantiating what I consider to be a very serious allegation.

Mr Jackson: I would even be prepared to seek out the name of the ministry bureaucrat who offered the suggestion, in a question form, "Why are hospitals saving premature babies at that age?" I am very pleased that I have been given an opportunity to reintroduce this subject, since the Minister of Health has been unwilling to discuss it for some time.

Ms Poole: I would very much appreciate it if you could table information, not necessarily in question form, but any facts and relevant material in this regard.

Mr Jackson: Certainly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just have a comment. While I think it is a useful thing to ask for the information, I do not think it is a legitimate point of order, if I might say so.

The Chair: I was about to say that, but I had to hear it out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The members are not in a position, any of us, of having to respond to another member in terms of justifying a particular remark. We are all accountable for any remarks we may make which are outlandish or extreme, as mine are on a regular basis. I am kind of glad you do not point it out each time it happens.

Mrs O'Neill: I am tempted.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think it is appropriate to ask, as you have done, that that be done and express caution. I think in another committee recently, a member who I will not name but who is very familiar to me has crossed the bounds of what should be acceptable practice in a committee. I think that is dangerous and it is something that we should all pay attention to, and it does not hurt to be reminded of it, but I think it is not a point of order.

Mr Jackson: If I may respond—

The Chair: Could I just comment on that? I think that was important.

I felt that it was important to hear out the explanation before I made a ruling. Since it has gone by that and everybody had a chance to respond, I felt it was fair to give equal time to everybody.

By the way, on the earlier misunderstanding, I did mean to say "parties," not "opposition and government." I was going to add it on but you jumped in, quite rightly, and corrected me.

Mr Jackson: If I may be given an opportunity, perhaps the more appropriate technical explanation of my statement is that efforts to sustain life are not undertaken. That is a more accurate way of describing what I had indicated. That is well documented with respect to level 1, 2 and 3 nurseries and the availability of services and incidences of premature babies. These are well documented.

It was a rather dramatic statement, but conceptually it is that efforts to sustain life are not undertaken, and that is a conscious decision, and

some hospitals have a different threshold than others.

The Chair: I think we have explored it. I am sorry that the rest of the committee has left, because the leave time will now be a quarter to two and I hope everybody got that message. I

very much appreciate again the indulgence of all in the chair's deliberations. At a quarter to two, then, we will see you, or at two o'clock or shortly after, at Ryerson.

The committee adjourned at 1223.

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From the Association for Bright Children:

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No. D-6 1990

Hansard

Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education

Éducation de la Petite Enfance

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 25 January 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 25 January 1990

The committee met at 1018 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

ÉDUCATION DE LA PETITE ENFANCE (suite)

The Chair: While I realize it is a little short to start, we have concurrence from the other two to proceed and I will take it that we have a quorum. It is just so that we can get everybody in and get a full hearing. I expect the other members to be here shortly, so I think we will proceed with our 10 o'clock deputation.

Perhaps Catherine Stewart from the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children would like to come up to the presenting area with her colleagues and introduce them and then we can get started, at least with the presentation, and deal with questions and answers. I welcome you. The other two might like to sit up here as well as being part of the—

Ms Stewart: They are going to cheer from the back.

The Chair: Okay, that is fine. First of all, welcome. I apologize for the late start; sometimes these things happen. We will proceed and I will turn the floor over to you, if you would like to proceed.

METRO ACTION COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ms Stewart: As you know or may remember, my name is Catherine Stewart. I am here on behalf of the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children.

First of all, I would like to begin by thanking the members of the committee for bringing us back. Indeed the problem of violence towards women and children has not gone away since we last presented to this committee. In fact, we have reason to believe that violence against women and children is in fact escalating, largely as a backlash against women.

Certain events of the last year and a half have brought deepened though painful awareness to the extent of the violence to a wider cross-section

of the Canadian public. On a daily basis, people are being confronted by the sickening and shameful revelations coming from the inquiry into the Mount Cashel orphanage, they have heard about the growing terror of people in the Miramichi, and in December they were horrified by the massacre of 14 young women in Montreal.

However, those of us working in this area do not regard these events as isolated or even surprising, given what we see every day. Women and children are being beaten, burned, bludgeoned, starved, raped and sometimes murdered every day in Canada, and we continue to say what we have always said, that the violence towards women and children is of such alarming and epidemic proportions that it demands a meaningful, caring, effective and immediate response from all sectors of our society. It is my hope that, as tragic as the events of the last year have been, they will motivate more systems, including the education system, to move in this direction.

Today I was asked to talk about early childhood, and while the focus of Metrac has been on women and teenagers, we were pleased to have the opportunity to talk about this age group for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, we are concerned that young children, by virtue of their size, their lack of knowledge and their trust and dependence on adult nurturance and authority, are the most vulnerable of populations to maltreatment and exploitation.

Second, what happens in the early years lays the groundwork for the attitudes, the values and behaviour that ultimately contribute to the tolerance and perpetration of violence in our society.

First let me address the vulnerability of young children in terms of four main areas.

First, sexual abuse: According to a national hospital survey, 27 per cent of sexually abused children in this country are abused before the age of seven. At the Hospital for Sick Children's suspected child abuse and neglect team, 56 per cent of children seen in 1988 for sexual abuse were younger than seven.

Besides what we know of occurrences of sexual abuse in early childhood, there are additional reasons for our concern about this age

group. Before sexual abuse was widely recognized, perpetrators could rely on the likelihood that their victims would not tell, and if they did tell, the chances are they would not be believed.

Now that these eventualities are less likely, experts in the field are worried that offenders are turning to younger and younger children. At a consultation in Ottawa last June, a mother spoke of a three-month-old baby in her community who was suffocated to death from swallowing semen. While death from sexual abuse may be unusual, the abuse of babies, I am sad to say, is not, even as young as two weeks old.

While we have made some progress in the prosecution of child sexual abuse offenders, it is still quite problematic to bring the full weight of the law against a violator of an inarticulate, perhaps preverbal child. The vulnerability of young children is directly proportionate to the invulnerability of their abusers to detection and criminal liability. Some have suggested that even the spread of AIDS increases the risk to young children for sexual abuse, as some adults, fearful of infection from another adult, may turn to them as a safe alternative.

The second area of vulnerability I would like to address is witnessing violence in the home. In his Toronto study, Michael Smith found that 14 per cent of the women had been beaten by their partner in the survey year; 80 per cent of the children in these situations will witness the violence.

Husbands who batter frequently begin beating their wives when they are pregnant, posing a threat even to the unborn child. Subsequently, many young children will witness their mothers being battered and even raped. In a recent case where a man had raped his wife in front of his four-year-old, he was acquitted. These children will be 17 times more likely to have behavioural problems if they have witnessed violence in the home, and in one of four incidents of wife assault, children will also be threatened or hurt. Others will also be murdered. Yet there is no legislation that specifically protects children hostage to a violent marriage.

The third area is physical abuse and neglect. Statistics in the early 1980s, before wider recognition of sexual abuse, indicated that 25 per cent of reported cases of child abuse involve physical injury while about two thirds involve deprivation of necessities. The study concluded that the number of families at risk for child abuse and neglect appears to be on the rise, in conjunction with increasing economic hardship that affects children's lives. In 1988, 83 per cent

of the children treated by the SCAN program at the Hospital for Sick Children for physical battery and/or neglect were under the age of seven.

The fourth area is hunger. While the world has been made aware of the number of children dying daily from hunger in the Third World, we have only begun to realize or recognize the growing problem in our own country. The Toronto medical officer of health estimates that one out of three children are coming to school hungry. The principal users of food banks of children, often of young single mothers. It goes without saying that without adequate nutrition, particularly in early childhood, not only will these children be more vulnerable to disease, but their physical, intellectual and total potential may be irreversibly affected.

These statistics are cause for grave concern, and from my own experiences in the schools and what I hear directly from the teachers, there are other important factors to note.

Kindergarten teachers express surprise and dismay at the growing amount of aggression in the children they see every day. Said a teacher of 20 years, "I've never seen anything like it." An experienced teacher supply teaching in a kindergarten reported that half the class hit, bit and even spat on her during the course of the day. Kindergarten and primary teachers in so-called affluent areas report having to buy food and winter clothing for their students out of their own pockets. A kindergarten teacher says she is worn out from dealing with the impact on the whole class of one boy who is regularly witnessing his mother being beaten. One teacher reported that a group of grade 3 students had acted out a gang rape on grade 1 children.

Last 2 June Metrac brought together educators from across Metropolitan Toronto to discuss current initiatives in the area of violence and to identify needs and recommendations for future directions. The overriding sense on that day was that schools are facing an unprecedented crisis as violence and its many outcomes inside and outside the school escalate and that teachers are in desperate need of appropriate resources and support in dealing with this crisis. Participants called out for decision-makers to actively recognize this fact and act accordingly.

The question is no longer whether the educational system should deal with these issues. The classroom practitioner does not have the luxury of choice. Many teachers are now dealing with the effects of violence on their students or, increasingly often, are dealing directly with

violence in their schools. The question is, how can the educational system respond in a way that is effective and has lasting impact? To that end, I would like to make a number of suggestions as to what the educational system can do, from our point of view, in terms of early childhood.

First, let me say it is hard to discuss the role of the education system in responding to the needs of early childhood without putting it in the broader context of society's response. Despite widespread knowledge and agreement that the first five years of a child's life are the most important and inadequate stimulation in these years has usually irreversible consequences, we as a society largely abandon these children. As a mother of a three-year-old, I have come to believe that as a community we are guilty of institutionalized neglect and even harbour a dislike for very young children.

What limited child care is available varies widely in terms of cost and quality. People I know working in the day care field say that in general the quality of care is even deteriorating. Some children are exposed to nursery school, again greatly varying in terms of quality, while others are not. Many children are left in the care of people with absolutely no training and nearly all are left in the care of people, usually women, compensated, if at all, for their important work at an appallingly low rate.

While I was asked today to talk about the school, as opposed to child care, the separation between these two illustrates part of the problem. Day care has been seen largely as a response to the needs of parents, primarily working mothers, and therefore not really in the domain of public responsibility. In effect, by providing inadequate child care, we are punishing children for a choice perceived to be made by their mothers of which we really do not approve.

The educational system, on the other hand, has been seen as a necessary response to a broader set of societal goals and therefore is legitimately publicly funded. Yet if the design and provision of both education and child care were based on a "best interests of the child" premise, as espoused in the United Nations convention on the rights of children, the needs of children, and ultimately society as a whole, would be better served.

While childrearing by parents is critical, children are subject to whatever skills and beliefs parents have in this all-important task, the most widespread belief being that parenting is a private pursuit for which one needs no particular knowledge or training. These factors are signifi-

cant in terms of the wellbeing of children, both in the short term and the long term.

From the point of view of violence and sexual abuse prevention, much of the foundation is or is not there, depending on early childhood experiences, by the time children come to school. For example, children's self-concepts are largely formed by the time they are five. Their sense of autonomy and their capacity to assert themselves have already been profoundly affected. A good piece of their mental and physical growth is complete. Socioeconomic disparities among children, a root cause of violence reinforced by the variance in early childhood education and opportunity, will be firmly in place. Sadly, a considerable number of children will already have been abused.

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In short, when children come to school, the educational system is faced with dealing with whatever did or did not happen during those critical early years. Teachers, who may themselves have had a difficult childhood, must struggle to deal with the damaged child, to try to compensate for less-than-ideal beginnings.

Have they been prepared in their training to do this? Do they get adequate support in this task? The answer to both these questions seems to be for the most part no. In spite of this, a good many kindergarten and primary teachers do an admirable job. But it is Metrac's contention that the educational system must more actively address the current reality in a number of ways.

First of all, training for teachers: Not only do many preschool-aged children spend the most important years of their lives with people with little or no training in child development, but this pattern is continued once they are in school. In a recent conversation, Brenda Rau, the director of SCAN at the Hospital for Sick Children, stated that one of the main problems is that teachers in the primary grades often failed to detect child abuse because they have limited knowledge of what constitutes normal behaviour and therefore often miss behaviour indicative of a serious problem.

As I stated last time, we have made some progress in detecting abuse, particularly sexual abuse, at an earlier age. None the less, the responsiveness of the school in this regard needs to be enhanced with ongoing training for all staff.

Furthermore, as many have noted, abuse of children is on a continuum. Without knowledge of child development and positive child management skills, teachers are more likely to respond to children in ways that are at best inappropriate,

and at worst unfair and damaging. While, hopefully, most teachers are struggling to help children overcome negative early experiences, still others undo positive development. There seems to be a significant number of anecdotal reports of confident children becoming diffident and unsure when they reach school age. This needs to be looked at.

There are also increasing reports of sexual and emotional abuse by teachers. According to preliminary research in these areas that I am involved in, it appears a significant number of teachers reported for abuse end up back in the classroom. This is made more possible by the likelihood of acquittal if the case goes to criminal court.

The challenge of ensuring that teachers who are at best unsuitable, and at worst abusive, are kept from the classroom is ongoing and will intensify as teacher shortages increase. Policies are inadequate in this area. There also are insufficient re-education opportunities for teachers who are causing problems for children. Until these issues are addressed, our schools cannot be advertised as places of safety for children, especially young children. They will continue to be physically and emotionally at risk.

To the best of our knowledge, teachers at the faculties of education appear to be getting very little in the way of information about indicators of child abuse, reporting responsibilities, positive child management strategies, conflict resolution and early childhood development in their training. While Ministry of Education documents such as *The Formative Years*, and *Discipline*, are admirable, educators tell me teachers need more practical guidance and assistance in integrating those concepts into the classroom on a day-to-day basis.

In the context of earlier references to the separation between child care and education and social disparities, we would support the extension of the kindergarten day and the objective of the seamless day as being in the best interests of the child. However, those changes would serve a limited purpose, and indeed may even do harm, without extensive early childhood training for teachers.

Resocialization is the second thing I would like to talk about. As we pointed out in our first brief to the committee, the school, along with parents, peers and the media, is a primary player in the socialization process and conveying of values. This is done through course content, how that content is taught, modelling by teachers and by the general climate of the school. For the

abused child, school is a last-chance alternative for teaching and modelling nonabusive behaviour and interaction. Education has a vital role to play in challenging learned attitudes and resulting behaviour patterns. Nowhere is this more important or perhaps more possible than in the early years.

Children in primary grades, I am told, are coming to school in large numbers with their macho wrestlers. They doodle WWF over everything. They frequently act out what they see on television. They have their war toys. Indeed they are reflecting societal values such as the denigration of vulnerability, weakness and powerlessness; the celebration of power, especially power over those who are weaker; and the triumph of violence. These values go hand in hand with other trends, such as the sexualization of children and the proliferation of child pornography, to make these very same young children increasingly vulnerable.

It is not a simple task for the education system to counter these trends. None the less there are educators who have taken specific successful steps to change the climate and the quality of interaction in their individual schools. As one principal said, "It took work, but we did it." When hearing of a teacher who said that she had to wait a very long time before she saw one gesture of kindness between her primary students, this same principal said, "Why did she wait so long?"

Values such as gentleness, kindness and respect for women, children, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples, other cultures, people with disabilities or people who are simply different can be and should be actively promoted and demonstrated through the school system by both male and female staff from kindergarten on.

To this end, we are particularly concerned about the lack of male teachers in the primary grades. Ironically, at least one federation has gone so far as to discourage men from working with primary grades, claiming that they are vulnerable to false allegations of sexual abuse.

While we would agree the need for guidelines on appropriate touching and careful screening are paramount, there is little to support this kind of overreaction. Young boys, particularly those who have witnessed violence, who have been victims themselves or whose fathers participate little in their lives, are in desperate need of positive male role models. Otherwise, their alternative is like to be the media. Need I say more?

Similarly, children need to see more women in positions of responsibility in the school system.

Third, life skills: People who work regularly with offenders, whether men who have sexually abused children, men who have battered their partners or parents who have physically or emotionally abused their children, have found common to most of these offenders a profound lack of self-esteem and social skills, such as assertiveness, problem-solving, the ability to express feelings, to anticipate and take responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, anger management, impulse control and empathy.

Sexual abusers are obviously lacking in skills necessary to a healthy sexuality. Sexual abuse of children and our tendency to blame the victim are to a large degree the product of sexual repression and the consequent projection of adult sexuality on to children. The reference by a British Columbia judge to a "sexually aggressive" three-year-old is an example of this.

In our previous briefs, METRAC has talked about the importance of the above skills being addressed throughout the curriculum and modeled in the school environment. We want to stress this again, and we ask you, if not beg you, as a committee to ensure that life skills and information about the various forms of violence are an integral part of a child's education from kindergarten through secondary school.

Indeed teacher-student interaction and teaching styles need to be evaluated in terms of their impact on violence and sexual abuse prevention skills, and this is of particular importance in the early years, when lack of social skills are more easily addressed. From a preventive point of view, this is certainly a logical place to start.

Schools can look at how they encourage, or discourage, development of personal safety skills for children. For example, most prevention programs emphasize the ability of the child to stand up for himself or herself on the premise that compliant children are easy targets for child molesters. But how many schools directly encourage children to question adults?

As a parent, I have worked very hard and my husband has worked very hard to respect our three-year-old's autonomy and to make a distinction between co-operation and compliance. If people say of her, "She has a mind of her own," as if that were some kind of liability, in terms of abuse the opposite is true. I was told recently by a highly respected paediatrician that a child needs to be compliant in order to fit into the school system.

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Most prevention programs for young children teach them that they can say no to activities that make them uncomfortable. How many schools allow a child to make choices about their participation in a given activity?

Prevention programs usually tell children some version of "run and tell" if something happens to them. Yet in a recent situation where a child in primary school was abused by an intruder in the school washroom, when the child went to the teacher to report the incident, the teacher responded with something like, "This better be important," in a sarcastic tone of voice. The child was silenced and simply went and sat down.

Last time I presented to you, I referred to Alice Miller's concept of "poisonous pedagogy," the rules that are implicit in childrearing and child-adult interaction that suppress vital spontaneity. Imagine a school where the staff actively and consistently countered those rules: where, for example, blind obedience is considered a sign of a vulnerable child rather than a good child; where there is no such thing as too much self-esteem, too much tenderness; where responding to a child's need, for example, for attention, is not seen as wrong, or spoiling the child, but as a duty and a source of joy; where respect for adults is earned rather than expected; where respect for children, their feelings and opinions is a given. This should be a goal of every teacher, every school, every community.

Next I would like to talk about parenting. I have stressed how vulnerable children are in the very early years. Much damage is done to some children before they reach school, often by well-meaning but ill-informed care givers. A casual visit to a grocery store or plaza is sufficient to gain a snapshot of childrearing in action, North American style.

As someone who has dealt a lot with children with developmental difficulties, I find it particularly heartbreaking to witness the frequency with which young children are punished for being normal: the father who strikes the 18-month-old child for wanting to get down and explore instead of staying still in his arms; the father who hits his two-year-old son for crying because he is tired and hungry; the mother who belittles a small child who has not yet mastered the task of climbing stairs and watching where she is going, all at the same time.

If there is any indication of the state of parenting or the dearth of knowledge about parenting in our society, I think it is the celebration of Bill Cosby as a model parent. This

is a man who appeared a while back on international television on a talk show, bragging about how he had hit his own child with a stick because the child had lied and then lied to the child, demonstrating to him that lying was wrong. The audience's reaction at this story of having hit this child with a stick was to laugh. Yet parents have actually turned to this man for advice about parenting.

One of the most significant things that the educational system should do for the wellbeing of preschool children is to ensure that all children in the transition years and years of specialization get training on how to do well the most important job in the world, parenting.

While these courses exist, for example, family studies, they are for the most part elective and the students who take them are mostly female. Even in the most extensively developed family life education programs, there are significant gaps. For example, parenting a child with disabilities is rarely addressed. These children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by nonfamilial as well as familial care givers. In addition, the whole issue of gender in childrearing is barely touched, both from the point of view of sex role stereotyping and the importance of shared parenting.

There are many reasons for wanting to involve men more in parenting, not the least of which is the incredible stress that women are absorbing because men are not participating. This in turn affects the quality of care for the child. For many men, however, the degree of responsibility they take for their own offspring is still perceived as a choice, while the control of their child is a right. This belief system serves no one, least of all the child.

Three out of five reports of physical abuse involve a male perpetrator. Over 90 per cent of sexual abusers of children are men. Hank Giarretto, a sexual abuse specialist, has pointed to the lack of involvement of men in early child care as one of the primary reasons for this.

It is critical that we imbue all males with an understanding, a sensitivity and a sense of responsibility towards children. The trend towards child care centres in the schools provides a welcome opportunity to do this. The potential of this opportunity will be missed, however, if all students are not required to be involved. If we are really to demonstrate the importance of time spent with younger children, students must be given credit for their involvement.

In addition, many parents, to say nothing of the children, would benefit from a parent's resource centre accessible through the local

school. This could include a drop-in program, books and resources on parenting, personnel able to give guidance in parenting and the opportunity for parents to simply give each other support.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about about services for teenagers as they impact on early childhood.

By the time children reach adolescence, many of them will have experienced some form of abuse, and given that one out of four sex offenders is a teenager, some of them will already be offenders. These are our future parents. The teen years are the last opportunity for schools to intervene in the intergenerational cycle of violence. It is also the last opportunity for the school system to assist victims and offenders in finding treatment so that they can heal themselves before they try to become parents of young children. This is critical to the prevention of abuse for both today's and tomorrow's young children.

It is no secret that services for teenagers, particularly young offenders, are limited and in many parts of the province nonexistent, a problem for you, as politicians apart from this committee, to address. None the less, schools do have a role to play here. Services for teenagers could be offered through the schools, in co-operation with community agencies, and through training school staff.

Finally, I have already referred to the difficulties created by the separation of child care services from education. Fragmentation in planning and implementation at the provincial level compromises the ability of government to respond to the needs of all children, particularly young children. The appointment of an ombuds-person for children, who then could co-ordinate interministerial activities, would potentially mitigate this problem and hopefully improve the situation for abused and exploited young children.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

First and foremost, that this committee recommend ratification and implementation by the Ontario government of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

That violence and its prevention be identified by this committee as an educational priority in terms of program development, staff development, policy development and support initiatives for students;

That a compulsory life skills/violence prevention curriculum that would address violence against women and children and skills for

prevention be developed and included in the reorganization of curriculum and integrated from kindergarten on;

That present initiatives be organized around a philosophical thrust that ensures that values consistent with healthy, equitable and nonabusive relationships infuse all aspects of the curriculum from kindergarten on;

That mandatory programming in positive parenting be implemented during the transition years as well as the years of specialization;

That the Ministry of Education ensure that all teachers, especially those working in the primary grades, be given training in early childhood education in addition to training in child abuse indicators and reporting responsibilities, cross-cultural sensitization and antiracism, sex equity, child development, all forms of violence, constructive child management for the classroom, conflict resolution and how to build self-esteem;

That education be viewed as a lifelong continuum beginning from birth and that what happens in the first five years be recognized as critical to the wellbeing of children in society as a whole. To this end, closer links need to be made between child care services, nursery schools, parents and the education system. I would say that was a modest beginning in terms of where we would like to see ultimately those links to go;

That parent resource centres be set up in all elementary schools in co-operation with local agencies;

That an ombudsperson for children be appointed at the provincial level to ensure monitoring of government policies in terms of their implications for the rights of children and to facilitate interministerial planning of activities related to the protection and wellbeing of children.

In conclusion, the first five years of life have been referred to by some as the magic years. For those for whom these years were painful, the vulnerability of young children may seem inevitable. For others, it is untenable and incomprehensible. None the less, the reality is there for those willing to face it and those willing to do something about it.

Government leaders have given lipservice to the idea that children are our future, our greatest resource, and they have given lipservice to the idea that we must do more than give lipservice to that idea. The Ontario government, along with the federal government, has the opportunity to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and we urge them to do that. I hope this will spark a new era in how we as a

country respond to the rights and needs of children.

Until we truly value our youngest population and manifest that value in policies, programs and services—in short, everything we do—small children will continue to be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. What I am seeing and hearing in our schools is alarming. Unless we take concerted, comprehensive action now, who knows what kind of society we and our children will be facing in the future?

I will give you two examples that I heard just in the last few days.

1050

One was in a high school of a gang rape that happened. Four boys dragged a girl, during school hours, out of the library into the washroom, and while one guarded the door, the other three took turns raping her. It only came to the attention of the school administration by accident, and when it did, it was discovered that this was not the first time they had done this. In fact, it was the fifth time they had done this in the same school, during school hours.

In another incident in high school—and I am pointing out that it is high school because I really feel what I am saying about what is happening with these kindergarten children is indicative, is symptomatic of what we might expect down the line—a girl grabbed another girl in a fight, put her head underneath her arm, took a kitchen knife out of her pocket and proceeded to stab her in the head.

A lot of the public is not hearing about these stories, because the schools, understandably, do not want the public to know about them. But I am hearing about them every day and I can tell you it deeply worries me, as a parent and also as an educator.

There is much to be done, and there is complexity to what needs to be done, but that should not and must not prevent us from identifying the totality of the task before us and doing whatever is necessary to ensure it is achieved.

Thank you again for inviting us. We hope we have added an important dimension to your focus on early childhood.

The Chair: Thank you very much. One only had to see last night on television the young 13-year-old boy in California who was burned by his father because of a custody fight, "If I can't have him, nobody will." He is horribly disfigured. He appeared on national television to tell his father to stay away. I just worry about a lot of things that go on in our society. American or

Canadian, it does not matter; some of these difficulties happen.

Just before I start, the stories that you hear, of course, are difficult if there is not some sort of study dealing with violence in the schools. It is a more formal thing than I guess what our friendly lawyers would tell us is hearsay evidence, and I do not doubt that it is perhaps true, but sometimes it is difficult if there is no identification of problems that exist.

I know I come from a different school board and a different situation, but certainly if my trustee heard that that was going on and that that had happened in a secondary school in Sudbury, he would be demanding some action from the principal and administrators. I am concerned that you do not seem to have that kind of relationship with your trustees to let the trustee of that area know this has happened and have him investigate. Maybe at the political level it says, you know, it should be done. However—

Ms Stewart: There are individual trustees who are very concerned about this in every school board in Metro, but they do not always learn about these incidents. I can tell you that when they do they certainly take action, but we are trying at this point to work on a number of fronts in the Metro schools, in the secondary schools, to address that kind of problem. We are trying to put things in place that will address those problems in the long term. What you can do in the short term is limited, other than responding to the particular situation.

The Chair: I appreciate that.

Ms Poole: Thank you, Catherine, for an excellent presentation. As usual, you have articulated very well not only Metrac's position but what many women and children who have been abused and subject to violence are feeling. They need an articulate spokesperson like yourself.

My questions are going to revolve around the training of those who deal with young children. I really think this is a crucial area. You talked about the faculties of education in your brief, and I detected a note of pessimism, certainly at the current status with the faculties as to what information is available for their students and how much of a priority it is.

Has METRAC had any linkage with the faculties of education or Ryerson's ECE program or the community colleges concerning training of their students? Have you been invited to talk to their students? Do you have any relationship at all?

Ms Stewart: We have tried to. I certainly personally have tried to make those links, but when I approached, for instance, the faculty of education in Toronto about coming and talking about this area, I was told that it was already being dealt with. But when I talked to people I know who have gone through that system, they say no, it is not being dealt with. So there is a discrepancy between what the dean of education believes is happening and what in fact is happening.

Ms Poole: The reality is there may not be a lot happening in any of these areas.

Ms Stewart: Apparently not. According to the people I know who have actually gone through the system, no, it is not happening. The receptivity is not there at the administrative level, apparently, because they are quite sure that it is being dealt with. There is probably a difference in perception in terms of depth.

I think what we expect in terms of depth is certainly not happening, and their perception that is being dealt with may be because it was talked about for half an hour one day. That is not what we are saying needs to happen.

Ms Poole: When we were over at Ryerson yesterday on an onsite view of what they are doing, actually Yvonne O'Neill asked a question of them about their third-year curriculum which had an optional course about—was it violence in society? Is that what it was called?

Mrs O'Neill: I think so.

Ms Poole: Anyway, it was related to violence and there was a full course on it. She asked: "Why is this optional? Shouldn't this be mandatory?" They said, "Well, actually we do discuss violence to children and abuse," but it was covered in one of their general courses. I do not know if it was sociology or human development or one of their courses. It was part of the curriculum to talk about it in a general way.

Perhaps that is something that we need to be pushing to say, not only do it in the broad general way, but let's get down to specifics and say it is a priority. You would be willing and happy to establish these linkages if you got the co-operation?

Ms Stewart: As I said, traditionally Metrac's main focus has been teenagers and women, so we have not made the links with early childhood as much, but we are certainly concerned about what happens at the faculties of education.

Ms Poole: So many times it is what happens to the young child that determines where he goes in the rest of his life. It is a very important time.

Ms Stewart: Exactly, and we are very concerned about that age group.

Ms Poole: This question in its own way is still related to the training. You have made a comment that you asked us as a committee—in fact, I think the word was “beg”—to ensure that life skills and information about the various forms of violence are an integral part of a child’s education from kindergarten through secondary school. Elsewhere in your brief, you also talked about the values of gentleness and kindness.

I am concerned if untrained personnel are working with very young children, particularly when they are working on a level of 20 to 1 or 25 to 1, where the teacher might be giving them the right message but perhaps not necessarily in the right way, so that instead of just very gently letting a child know that there are different things out there that, as a child, he or she must keep an eye on, a child instead has this paranoia and this fear that this is going to happen to him.

As a parent, you or I could talk to our child in a one-to-one relationship and be able to get the point across. I guess the question I am going to ask you is, do you think that we can have massive training of the people who deal with early childhood education and be able to have confidence that they can relate it to the broad masses? Is that going to be enough or do we have other avenues we can follow?

Ms Stewart: I think you need other avenues as well. That is a good starting place. You have to start somewhere, and certainly the training has to be in place. They have to have the training, but there has to be an ongoing monitoring system, because I think that individual teachers can be quite unconscious of, for instance, the tone of voice they are using and what particular message they are giving.

We are suggesting in the area of violence, for instance, that there be team teaching so that there can be that kind of support as well as monitoring. But I think there needs to be more monitoring generally.

In one school I was in, an elementary school, the researchers and myself were very upset with one particular teacher because she was calling the kids names, she was constantly yelling at them, telling them they were not worth anything, they were just a bunch of brats, she could not stand them. This is basically what she was saying, and it was quite audible to anyone walking down the hallway. We reported this and nothing was done about it.

Ms Poole: My child had the same teacher in grade 3. We got rid of her. She is now a consultant for the whole French immersion system. They did not get rid of her, they just gave her more responsibility.

Ms Stewart: They moved her to another school, and that is another concern we have too. We have seen teachers who have been accused of touching children inappropriately or even sexually abusing them and the response is just to move them to another group of children. That is a concern.

There needs to be more safeguards built into the system, and as I pointed out in the brief, I do not think that is a problem that is going to get any easier as it becomes harder to replace those teachers as the teaching shortages increase.

Ms Poole: I think it is an excellent concept to reach children when they are young. I just think we have to have a large amount of caution in how it is handled and make sure people are so well trained.

Ms Stewart: Absolutely. But to me, the fear of how they are going to present it is not a reason for not doing it. I think in the prevention programs, in the language that we developed in the elementary school program that the Metro special committee has implemented, for instance, we worked very hard on language that was nonthreatening. I think you can give teachers language that does not engender unnecessary fear in children. I think that is quite feasible and we have demonstrated that we can do that.

Ms Poole: One final question—

The Chair: I know this committee deals in a very wide-ranging way, but I am concerned when constantly, on the record, kinds of allegations are made that I do not see any documentation for. I am concerned when people are constantly talking back and forth on a committee about this teacher and that teacher and nothing appropriate was done.

I would like documentation of that before we continue along that line. I just am concerned. Where I have documentation and I can get back and deal with these things, that is appropriate, but I would ask everybody to be very conscious of other people’s rights in this thing too. If you are not willing to document, would you try to limit your comments, to both the committee and the witness, to actual documented cases?

I am very much concerned. This is a public record, it is Hansard, and the more and more this goes on, I have a very deep concern for the kinds of things that the media, which you rightly talked

about, would pick up. I just read that into the record because I am warning everybody of my concern.

Ms Poole: The last question is a bit of a chicken-and-the-egg type of question. I have a bit of a concern about implementing a curriculum and having a mandate from the Ministry of Education saying that certain things must be in the curriculum without having the training of the teachers come first, again, particularly dealing with young children.

If the guidelines for 1990-1991 suddenly say that violence towards women or life skills with these different areas must be a priority, as I think is part of your recommendation that this be implemented, but in the meantime there has not been this massive training program that needs to happen, I am concerned that we will have a lot of people out there who will not have the skills, the training, the backup documentation and the methodology to actually do the job properly. Before we even get to the curriculum part, should we not have that training program in place and give our teachers some tools to do this?

Ms Stewart: I think the training is absolutely critical. I agree with you that it has to come first. But our sense is that if it were mandated through the curriculum, what would happen is that that would force people to put that training in place. But we would like to see the Ministry of Education also take responsibility for training initiatives in this area.

Mr Furlong: I have a couple of questions. On page 3, under the heading "Witnessing violence," you indicate in one of the last sentences, after giving some statistics, "There is no legislation that specifically protects children hostage to a violent marriage."

You might expand on that. I would like to know what kinds of things you would envisage in this legislation. I am a lawyer, so I can tell you it does not mean much, because I believe there is legislation in place to protect everyone. I would like to know what specifically you are talking about.

Ms Stewart: The Child and Family Services Act does not specifically outline a child who is witnessing family violence as in need of protection in our Ontario legislation. That is in the legislation of Alberta, and it is also in the legislation of Newfoundland, but we do not have that in our Ontario legislation.

Mr Furlong: We have a number of statutes and laws that do specifically protect the child. The problem, it would seem to me, is, first of all,

the identification that it is happening. Once that is done, there are a lot of things in place, I think, that the child is "protected." I use the word in quotes. I know you are going to disagree with me. Perhaps you say it is not far enough.

It strikes me that when you look at the whole spectrum, everyone has rights. You talk about the autonomy of your child and everybody else being able to be protected by the law. It concerns me that we get too specific in the sense that you focus on one thing and you get tunnel vision and you do not sort of see the outside. I just make that comment because it strikes me that, by itself, I do not appreciate that there has to be some specific alternative.

Ms Stewart: Well, there has to be. I will tell you why. When the children's aid society gets a call about a concern about a child who is in a situation where the mother is being beaten, under the legislation it does not have the legal right to intervene—that is a concern—unless the child has also been physically attacked. The legislation is very specific. I have worked with the children's aid and I know about those situations.

Nor do you have a right to go and remove a child from that situation. You do not have a mandated right, and that is what I am talking about. The children's aid may try to get involved in those situations on a voluntary basis, but it has no mandated right to be involved.

Mr Furlong: You indicated that you do work with educators and so on. I think in response to Ms Poole's question you were sort of not very happy with the response you were getting that things were already being done and you were not being invited to participate. Have you worked with the teachers' federations? Do you participate in professional development days? Do you do any of that kind of work?

Ms Stewart: We do a lot of professional development with teachers, and also we certainly work with the federations. We work quite closely with the federations.

Mr Furlong: Finally, with respect to those cases that you referred to in the high schools, I assume that once these cases are reported and they come to light, some activity or action is taken. For example, if these cases are brought to your attention, do you take any initiative to get the police involved, or others?

Ms Stewart: In an individual incident, do you mean, do we take any initiative?

Mr Furlong: Yes.

Ms Stewart: Not unless we are called to be involved with a situation. Sometimes I am called

in on a consultant basis to work with a school where an incident like this has happened and to advise what to do. Generally we hear about those kind of situations after the fact, but they have alerted us to the fact, for instance, that most school boards do not have a protocol in place, proceedings in place, as to what to do when a student has sexually assaulted another student on school property. We are working with the school boards to get that kind of thing in place.

Mr Furlong: Are you being successful?

Ms Stewart: I think yes. I think there is receptivity there at this point.

Mr Furlong: Finally, you have provided some statistics. I am wondering. In your comments about the sexual and emotional abuse by teachers, I did not notice it in the document. You can talk about the numbers of one in four wives being abused. Do you have any kind of statistic or any idea of the abuse going on by teachers, both emotional and sexual, of students?

Ms Stewart: No, we do not. We have asked the Canadian Teachers' Federation to undertake a study to look at the disposition of cases—what happens when there is a report, whether charges are laid through the criminal process and beyond—but there are no statistics that I know of on that. In fact, when I have asked for statistics, for instance from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, it said it does not keep them.

Those statistics are hard to come by. Statistics of actually reported cases are one thing, but then to find out the actual number of cases that are going on and are not being reported is obviously even more problematic.

1110

Mr Neumann: First of all, thank you for the presentation. I am pleased to see you that support more males being involved in the early years of teaching. I think the young boys do need role models of seeing adult males in caring and nurturing situations.

In your first recommendation you mentioned the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Could you provide us with a copy of that?

Ms Stewart: Yes, I could. I do not have one with me, but yes, I can. Do you not have a copy?

The Chair: I think we have access to that in the Legislative Assembly library, and as I remember, it is a fairly large document.

Ms Stewart: Yes.

The Chair: I think it is available, though.

Ms Stewart: There are summaries of it, however.

The Chair: Yes, summaries, but I wanted to clarify that.

Mr Neumann: You made mention of the importance of our nation adopting this. Has this been discussed at the national level, and do you know what status it has?

Ms Stewart: I do not know what the status is or the process in terms of ratification exactly, but Canada was one of the central participants in the writing of the convention on the rights of the child, so one would hope that a ratification would follow on the heels of that.

Mr Neumann: I got the impression from your presentation that somehow there had been foot-dragging, or is it just a question—

Ms Stewart: I think there is always a question of whether a government is going to actually proceed to ratification. In terms of this particular document, it is going to have very practical implications for the government in terms of changes in legislation and changes in the kinds of services that are provided. It is going to provide legislative opportunity for child advocates to even bring cases through the courts, because this will become international law when this is ratified. There may be some hesitation around that, but I really do not know. I do not know what the status of it is at this point. I know there is a lot of support for it. I know they have not ratified it yet. I do not know what the process is for them to do that.

Mr Neumann: There is an old Indian saying, something about walking a mile in another person's moccasins, not judging a person until you have walked a mile in his or her moccasins, and I thought of that as you were talking about the teaching of young children. You seemed to have a very sort of laissez-faire attitude towards the directing of young children. I am wondering, have you had any experience in this area yourself, in terms of teaching or managing a large group of young children?

Ms Stewart: Yes, I have. In fact, when we do the prevention program there will be 250 to 300 children to manage at one time, so yes, I have had some experience in managing a large group.

Mr Neumann: Do you not think that children need some kind of stability and direction?

Ms Stewart: I absolutely think they need some stability and direction and they need limits and all those things, but the question is, when are those limits imposed and for what reasons? A lot of limits are imposed on children very arbitrarily,

without considering whether they are important or considering what other implications the imposition of those limits cause. I think that it is a question of balance. Yes, all children need guidelines, but sometimes the way those things are imposed are damaging to the child and to the child's sense of self-respect and self-concept.

Mr Neumann: So you do favour children knowing what the rules are in the classroom and using positive reinforcement, rather than—

Ms Stewart: I am not a great believer in rules per se, the fewer rules, the better, but I think as the best way to constructive discipline, what you do is involve the children in setting the rules and the consequences for those rules. The rules come out of a democratic process, which I feel very strongly we should be engaging children in at an early age, so that when those rules are set the children feel some ownership with those rules and do not resent when a consequence is imposed that they do not feel they had any say in.

Mr Neumann: Please do not get me wrong. I am not endorsing in any way or supporting in any way the use of sarcasm or criticism or negative put-downs, but I think that children have to have a clear understanding of what the rules are in a classroom and I think, yes, you can involve them in shaping those rules.

I hear some criticism from my constituents, single-parent moms and others, who have teenagers and who think that our society has gone too far, that the pendulum has swung too far in terms of the rights of children and away from the rights of parents. I have had stories presented to me—and I recognize the caution of the chair in not relating stories without documentation, but in a general way—stories of children who leave home where the parent can do nothing to get the kids to return to the home. Maybe that child has gone to live with someone else and the mother is afraid the child may not be in the best situation in that other home. Maybe he or she is beyond an age where the children's aid society can step in and the police are saying, "There's nothing we can do and the rights of the child have to be respected." I hear some of that backlash. Do you have any comment on that?

Ms Stewart: What you are introducing, I think, is a complicated thing, a complicated issue, that involves a lot of society and different societal forces. For instance, we know that a lot of the children who run away from home have been sexually abused at home, so we have to kind of balance that information.

I think there are tremendous problems in the teen years. I think there are tremendous problems

for single mothers in terms of the kind of pressures on them and the lack of support. I think the last thing we would be saying is talking about—I think parents should be supported. Parents need support in doing what they are doing, in the job they have. But with respect to the rights of children and where you draw that line, I am not under the impression, certainly in terms of what I am seeing in the schools, that we have gone too far.

Mr Neumann: I gathered that from your presentation.

Ms Stewart: No, I do not think we have gone too far.

Mr Neumann: That is why I asked you about how you would react to the comments I hear on the other side.

Ms Stewart: I do not think we have gone too far. I do not think we have gone far enough, but it really depends on what you are saying in terms of the rights of children.

Obviously, the rights of anyone have to be balanced against the rights of other people—not over, but in tandem with—so, you know, when the child is behaving in a way that is damaging to other people, then obviously that is where limits come in. There has to be some societal consensus on where those limits are set, and there is not.

Certainly I have seen individual cases where I would say—for instance, the mother who threatened to bring a lawyer against a school which had failed her child because he had shown a pornography film in class. There certainly are those—

The Chair: No, no, no.

Ms Stewart: Sorry, I did it again. It is very hard for me not to do it.

There are those situations, but overall I think that we have not gone far enough in really recognizing rights as well as needs, what the needs are of young children. I do not think we are doing that well with it at this point.

The Chair: Thank you. We have one more short question.

Mr Michash: Just to follow up on Mr Neumann's questioning, you mentioned the lack of male teachers in primary grades. As a former teacher, I saw a lot of effective male teachers in the younger years, in the younger grades. Could you mention which federation has come out with the statement that it is discouraging that? Is that in line, Mr Chair?

The Chair: Well—

Mr Michash: I would like to follow up on that, because I am quite—

Interjection.

Mr Miclash: Yes, that is right. I am quite interested.

The Chair: You can continue with the question. I was just making a warning.

Mr Miclash: Right, I understand that.

The Chair: Please do not—I mean, if you can pursue that kind of line of questioning, I think it is—

Mr Neumann: He is asking for documentation you suggested we should have.

The Chair: That is right, exactly, thank you.

Ms Stewart: I will get you that documentation. I can provide that.

Mr Miclash: As I say, I found primary male teachers very effective and I would really like to follow that up, if that is possible.

1120

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation, in light of other events, working along with our committee; we appreciate your coming before us. Thank you again.

We now have the Ontario Association of Junior Educators. Lynda, please come forward with your co-presenters. Again, our apologies for the late start. You were here for the earlier explanation of what happened, so I will not go through it again, but I will assure you that you will have the full attention of the committee for the time allotted.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR EDUCATORS

Ms Pogue: I am the president of the Ontario Association of Junior Educators. We are a volunteer unpaid group in terms of the Ontario Association of Junior Educators. However, the three of us are employed by different boards of education in Ontario. Right now I am presently involved in being a consultant for the North York Board of Education.

Valerie Stief is a member of the executive. She is also a consultant in the North York Board of Education. The three of us, by the way, have all taught in the primary and junior divisions, so we are live ones here. We all have representation in different committee work throughout Ontario. Valerie is presently the elementary counsellor for the science teachers' association of Ontario. Peter Rasokas is from Norfolk county and is the first vice-president of the Ontario Association of Junior Educators. We are here to present to you who we are and our position on early childhood education in Ontario.

You have our three pages. Basically, the association itself is a group of people who have come together, with the ministry's blessing, to dedicate ourselves to the growth and development of the educators of junior children in Ontario, children between the ages of nine through 12.

You can see our goals there. I would just like to highlight the second one, please. The idea is that we are advocates of junior children in Ontario, which means that when we get asked to respond to ministry groups, etc, we are there to talk about the child. We are a group that is supportive of the development of the educators and indirectly we are the advocates of the child through this association.

We provide a forum for discussion and debate, response to issues and research in junior education, etc, we support the actions of members through providing information to community and other interested groups, and we maintain strong links with the Ministry of Education and other professional organizations involved in the nurturing and education of the junior child.

Our members are co-ordinators, consultants, recognized curriculum leaders in the junior division and all educators who are interested in and responsible to junior education in Ontario. On our executive we have members who belong to the CCAPE organization, the Consultants/Coordinators' Association of Primary Educators, which provides a very direct link between us as junior educators and the primary educator in Ontario.

Our mandate, as you can see on the second page, is to provide members with three general meetings per year. I would just like to explain this a little bit, because the people who come to our groups are co-ordinators, consultants and teachers who are involved at a grass-roots level. We are not really the policymakers, we are the ones who do it.

In the fall what we do is gather together, usually at 5050 Yonge Street, which is the board office in North York, and people from all over Ontario gather together and discuss issues that are impeding them back at the ranch.

We are only three years old, by the way; we have been around for three years. Some of us do not look it, but we have been around for three years.

In the winter we showcase one board of education. So far we have been in Peel, we have been in Hamilton and this year we are going to showcase Dufferin-Peel, which means that a board of education that has any junior initiatives

in Ontario is given a chance to show off for the rest of Ontario. At that time we also have a general meeting where we discuss current issues, and in the spring we have a two-day conference that is dedicated to the junior educators—it is the only one of its kind—the educators of children in the junior division, and they have been held for the last three years at OISE. Valerie is the conference chair.

We have a newsletter, as you can see.

We respond to ministry requests in providing junior educators for advisory committees. For example, Peter has been involved with the development with exemplary programs and advisory committees; another one of our executive is involved with a multiculturalism committee; I myself was involved with Julie Mathien on the child care advisory committee; and we will be asked to respond to the new Formative Years. I am calling it the new Formative Years. The name keeps changing. I have no idea what it is called today.

The Chair: We have one.

Ms Pogue: You have yours? Okay.

We respond to issues and concerns of the junior educators through correspondence, presentations and/or direct consultation.

Two and a half years ago there seemed to be a movement afoot by the Minister of Education to move Ontario's schools towards standardization in terms of testing. We responded on behalf of our members to the Minister of Education on our position on standardized testing in Ontario, which leads me to our concerns involving early childhood education in Ontario. I am going to speak to each of these points, Peter is going to speak to point three, universality of access, and Valerie is going to speak to balanced programming. We left you a little space if you want to write, rather than giving you pages of notes.

The Chair: Some of us are teachers.

Ms Pogue: There are teachers, that is right.

Our first concern in early childhood education in Ontario is the concept of the invisible boundary. The impact of the primary division on the junior division is very powerful. What happens in the early years affects the children, the educators, the program and the people who write curriculum and make policy statements for the junior division and beyond. What happens in early childhood education is critical to us.

We found that in the child care advisory group, we were discussing children from age 3.8 to 12. The preoccupation in terms of time was with the child aged 3.8, and we still have the latchkey child, which happens when they are 10, 11, 12

years of age. We are very concerned with that, and it is going to lead into discussion of universality of access to day care and to child care.

Not only that, we are advocates of onsite child care and we feel that while training is critical to child care—and we will get into teacher training—the emphasis should not be put on paper qualifications as much as it should be put on nurturing. Paper qualifications are equally important, but the nurturing person is what we want in terms of getting away from some of the issues that were raised by the last presentation, the stress on children.

The onsite universality of access of child care is critical. We would like Peter Rasokas to speak to this, please.

Mr Rasokas: I just want to mention that, first of all, I am very proud to be an educator. I am very proud to be a part of this profession. I want to put it on record that I am very impressed with the educators I work with day to day, their dedication, their commitment to young people and their willingness to go above and beyond the call on a regular basis. I celebrate with them the work we do with young people. I realize that it is always growing and it is always changing and we are always asked, if you will, to meet or deal with changing times and changing needs. I think we are trying to cope with those changes as best we can, but I feel that they are a very sensitive group of people working with the young people of Ontario.

1130

I am here today not only as a representative of the Ontario Association of Junior Educators, but also as an educator who has spent his career working in a small rural board. As such, it is my intent this morning to focus on some of the challenges facing smaller boards in providing universal access to early childhood education.

If universality is going to be a key aspect of early childhood education in Ontario, which is endorsed and supported by OAJE, then it must be more than just a statement of intent. The provincial government has indicated that the concept of early childhood education is supported, yet in reality allows local boards the option of opting in while limiting capital grants, which certainly restricts the principle of universality.

There are unique challenges to those rural and smaller boards, to native peoples, to those who have to accommodate children with special needs. Many of these challenges relate to funding and the difficulty of raising extra moneys from a shrinking tax base. Many larger boards were

already offering full-day kindergartens and junior kindergartens before the additional funding was approved. Accommodation factors were not an issue for many of these boards.

Now there is a growing public perception that all boards are able and therefore should provide both full-time kindergartens and junior kindergartens, while in many of these boards schools are already bursting at the seams. Current enrolments have been rising. There is an effort as well to encourage a more child-centred, individualized program. Some boards are trying to reduce class sizes as well. Therefore, many school sites are now awash with portables.

Funding for capital costs appears to be very slow in coming. How are smaller boards or rural boards and those boards who have not yet offered these programs going to raise the necessary funding for additional buildings? Unfortunately, with both the opting out clause and the lack of capital funding, what we will continue to see are two systems of education: one which allows children to enter school at 3.8 years of age and another where enrolment can begin at 4.8 years, and at that only half-time for the first year. This is grossly unfair.

Within the current legislation in grants programs, additions to existing buildings as well as new buildings are barely keeping pace with the increasing numbers of students. As younger children are invited to come to school, room in existing buildings will have to be made available. These youngsters have unique requirements, both in space and resources and professional guidance.

Is the Ministry of Education establishing norms for ratios of pupils to teachers for JK and kindergarten classes? While I truly applaud the current government for downsizing grades 1 and 2 to 20 to 1, four- and five-year-olds need to be given the same consideration. I would also argue quite strenuously that if it is good for grades 1 and 2, then why is it not also good for grades 3 and 4 and grades 5 and 6 as well? Attending to individual needs should not just begin at six years of age and, I would strongly suggest, should not end at seven years of age.

As well, as more space is needed within the school buildings for JK and K programs, the older children, especially junior division students, are being accommodated in portables. If numbers of students are relatively low, I have seen many creative teachers make portables quite livable. However, these portable children are just that. For logistical reasons, these children appear to be always on the move, and when numbers are

up in the high 20s or even into the 30s, movement within the portables is extremely limited. Not only should we limit the number of students who can be squeezed into a portable, but their isolated environment also requires more funding support for equipping these structures.

The issue of child care also raises unique concerns. While the concept of providing a certain level of day care in schools is an excellent initiative, I am concerned with the time lines and costs. If these spaces will only be funded when a new building is constructed, then I would suggest that in many regions of Ontario, boards will never provide much more than token day care facilities.

Another issue that should be addressed within these existing circumstances is the latchkey children. Knowing the psychological and social fragility of both primary and junior-aged children, I find it frightening that these five- and six-year-olds, and yes, even 9- and 10-year-olds, have to sit alone in front of a television behind a locked door and hope that mom or dad will not be too late. The potential for psychological scarring is beyond belief.

The Ontario Association of Junior Educators would strongly support school boards in encouraging groups and individuals to sponsor day care within local school buildings for latchkey children. It must be stressed that these programs must be affordable, since many of these children are from lower socioeconomic groups.

With this move to accommodating younger children into our school system, we must also address the issue of busing. Are current allowances for distance from school, that is, 1.6 kilometres from school, appropriate for a three- or four-year old? In rural areas, if numbers are small, how far do we bus these young children, and does it matter if they are required to travel to central locations away from their own community schools? Can we justify putting a four-year-old on a bus at seven in the morning and having the child return at 5 pm?

While perhaps it could be argued that this is better than nothing, it is certainly far from ideal. The needs of the young child must be taken into consideration throughout this process.

In smaller boards as well, support staffs are usually the last piece to be fitted into the puzzle. While the curriculum staff in Norfolk, for instance, receives excellent support from the board for the work we do in developing and implementing programs in our schools for challenging teachers to upgrade their professional skills, for insuring availability of appropriate

resources and developing teaching strategies reflective of the needs of individual students, many other small boards either lack the commitment or the financial wherewithal to provide support, even for existing programs.

Will there be any expectations for small rural boards to provide even a minimum of support? Will these individuals be expected to reflect a certain level of training and expertise under existing regulations? I must have my junior specialist to hold my current position. Will similar expectations be built into early childhood programs? If these children are to receive a quality learning experience throughout the province, then support staffs must be established with appropriate expertise to assist qualified teachers in all jurisdictions.

Along these same lines, will boards be expected to supply additional experts—the psychometrists, the psychologists or whatever other resource personnel—who will be required to deal with exceptionalities? Will native children and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to quality programs?

This brings me to my final point, on nutrition and hunger. I am not aware of any studies recently done in Ontario on the current status of children coming to school with their nutritional needs being met. However, many studies do exist which directly correlate physical development, and in particular brain growth, to appropriate nutritional intake or the lack thereof. While traditionally this has been the responsibility of the home, it is truly an injustice for young people, who are not capable of providing for themselves, to be deprived of such a crucial basic need and live with the effects, diminishing their abilities for the rest of their lives.

The Ontario Association of Junior Educators would recommend that other agencies besides the Ministry of Education be empowered to provide a nutritional support program for children in need.

In conclusion, I would urge you to examine all initiatives as they affect all boards to ensure operative universality rather than universality in principle. As such, I would urge this committee to recommend that appropriate funding formulae be developed. Thank you very much.

Ms Pogue: Thank you very much, Peter. I will move on to point 4 now. The *Hurried Child* is a book by David Elkind, and he has had quite an impact on a number of school systems in Ontario.

We are very concerned with the concept of the hurried child: that the attitude is that more is better, that the stress-filled day is what happens

when a child does not have a seamless day—we will talk about that in a moment; I think you spoke with the Ministry of Education on the concept of the seamless day—that the child have a high-energy, balanced day that also has peaceful, reflective, gentle moments so the child is not going to become—which is what we are finding. The precedent being set in the primary division, impacting on the junior division, impacting into early adolescence, is resulting in such things as increased numbers of early adolescent suicide.

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It is a very critical thing that we are talking about here. The hurried child is filled with stress. They have this growing aggression, which you heard about in the last presentation. In terms of education, the stress we feel should be on such things as inquiry and decision-making, rather than accessing more and more and more.

Moving on to point 5, in terms of teacher-child ratio, Peter has alluded to several of the ramifications of teacher-child ratio and what happens in the lowering of the teacher-child ratio in the primary division. We think it is a critical thing. The smaller the teacher-child ratio is, the more you can identify the children at risk and the more you can identify the needs of children, whether they are special needs at high level or at the lower level. It can allow the teacher more intensity in terms of the program planning. However, what is happening is that there is a direct impact right now in our boards of education that there are larger classes in the junior division because of this.

We would hope that what will happen is that while we keep the numbers down for the young child, the whole concept of early identification is also, as some wards called it, early and ongoing identification; that children who slip through your fingers, for God knows what reasons, in the early stages are continually observed and continually dealt with all the way through the educational system.

If the emphasis is put on the primary division to lower the numbers of children in the primary division, it shows up in the junior child, and it shows up in a very stressful day for the junior teacher, because he or she sometimes has as many as 35 kids in the class.

Turning to teacher training, we would support the idea that there be consistency in teacher training across Ontario. Right now it is arbitrary and it is inconsistent.

The three of us are all involved with universities—myself with the University of Toronto, Valerie with York University and Peter

with Brock University—in teacher training. We have bottom-line ideas about what it is that we should be doing. We know by our constituents and because we happen to be writers and authors and experts in the field, but several of our colleagues are not, and there is an inconsistency in teacher training. We would suggest that there be some bottom-line consistency in terms of teacher training.

Also, we feel that there should be mandatory upgrading in teacher training. Because of the great numbers and needs of hiring teachers, you are finding that people who are trained in perhaps the intermediate division will come and they will take a summer course—three-week, four-week, sometimes a two-week course—and get the qualifications in order to teach in the primary division. This does not a primary teacher make. The whole concept that there be mandatory upgrading and retraining is a concept that OAJE supports.

We also feel that in terms of the hiring of new teachers, sometimes the paper qualifications outweigh who the person is who is in front of the hiring board. Once again, as we mentioned before when we talked about child care and the invisible boundary, in terms of teacher training we feel that you cannot make someone be gentle and kind; you treat them that way. In terms of hiring, when the hiring boards are involved with the hiring of new teachers, we must be very aware not to take a look only at paper qualifications but the person's propensity towards early childhood education.

With that in mind, Valerie, I would like to turn it over to you for balanced programming.

Mrs Stief: I think in the last five years the shift in the educational paradigm from looking at a very deficit learning model that teachers implemented in the classroom to a much more holistic look at teachers looking at children fits in with what the Ministry of Education terms the image of the learner as a self-actualized, self-motivated, independent learner, which I think we would all like to say we are after, coming through the educational system.

That puts a great emphasis on the teachers of: how do they plan for that; what do they have to know about that; and how do they balance the program so kids become whole people?

One of those ways is looking at the balance in the program between the academics that are involved with environmental issues, with social studies, with science—and I have a very strong bias, obviously, around science—the arts and

around communication. There has to be a balance.

The impact right now with technology is another whole area that teachers are not informed about. They do not know how to do that. It comes back into, how do we help our children have a balanced program when we, as the adults, are not sure what we are being asked to learn in these areas?

This being the International Year of Literacy, and I think it is a big issue that we are all dealing with, the children coming into our schools who do not have English as a first language, how do we deal with that? How do we help those children who are coming into our classes at a cognitive level where they can handle the academic area but are linguistically five, six and seven years behind? We have to balance that part of the program by helping them to participate in a much more oral section of the program. It is not all reading and writing.

When we look at primary children, the model of the infant schools that is used in Britain, where the children are involved in a lot of dance, activities involving music, self-expression, affective activities and small-group work, we would like to see much more of that kind of model brought into our elementary primary classes and then moved into our junior classes.

It goes back to Lynda's comments about the hurried child. They are becoming little adults and they are not having a chance to be children in the schools. The demands made on the teachers are such that they do not have a chance to do that. There is not enough time, and one more mandated curriculum is not going to help to give them that time.

The kind of evaluation that teachers are being asked to do also has to be part of their balanced programming. It is not just evaluation marked on grades, it is on participation, it is on relations with children, it is on relations with the other adults in the school, it is teachers watching children, making notes, seeing what kinds of needs they have, both academically and socially, and physically, for many of our children who are now mainstreamed. That is all a part of the balanced program that is necessary.

I know OAJE is trying very hard to work with the primary association to see if we can bridge some of those activities and ways of looking at children and how they are growing. The benchmarks program from the Ministry of Education will help us to address that question over the next little while as well.

I think two other points I would like to make are about the process versus product issue. We feel that both are necessary. You cannot function in a vacuum and you cannot process things without having something to show that you are processing or have processed. One of the areas in the programming is seeing that there is an equal balance between the amount of time children have to digest, to synthesize, to think about things, and how they then can share that information with other people. It is only by talking about what you know that you actually begin to know that you know something about it or how much you do not know about it.

I think what goes part and parcel with that, and we looked at this whole role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, is the question of the me generation. "I only do it because I get some kind of extrinsic payback," is not the kind of program we want to see offered, particularly with little children. I know we have had this discussion many times about how kids only do their work if they get stickers. Our association is violently opposed to that, where if you do your work and the teacher says, "That's good work," that is the only reason for doing it. That is not creating an environment to make a self-actualized, independent learner.

The Chair: Bluebirds and orioles.

Mrs Stief: That is right. So you still remember.

Mr Jackson: And smiling fairies.

Mr Rasokas: And bird droppings.

Mrs Stief: Yes, we have probably all given them, there is no question of that, and we probably all received them too. If you were in the good spelling group, you got one every Friday.

I think the other point too is that programming and learning is a continuum and we have to continue to work to make sure that the programming that is offered is not teaching children again and again and again what they already know, but honouring what they know and taking what they know and working from there and having the children involved with that. Prior experiences and prior knowledge are vital to programming for them.

The last point I would like to make is about story. There is considerable evidence, literature and research done by people like Gordon Wells and David Booth in our province to look at the fact that children who are not exposed to language at home are in a deficit position before they come to school. Children who are being read to at home come with over 500 hours of language

already internalized, and children who are not coming with those advantages are disadvantaged in our school system.

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We would like to see, particularly in the older years, programs put into place in schools where the children have access to materials to take home. Some of the schools have started these programs. The language being read to the children does not have to be English. As long as they are hearing language in a genre of story, we think, that is important.

I guess I have to make a comment after hearing a group this morning. I was sitting on my hands with Krazy-Glue on my lips back there not to say anything. I do think that in the 23 years that I have been an educator, we have seen big changes in the classrooms. It is very difficult for teachers to deal with a number of issues. We are no longer just teachers; we are now social workers. In many of the schools where I work, much of the day is spent, not on curriculum design, but on solving social problems. I think I would just like to end with that.

Ms Pogue: Thanks, Val. We have moved to point 8 now and talking in terms of what we would like to see in early childhood education in the physical environment, the physical plant.

First of all, in taking a look and in speaking with architects, they have told us that several schools, most of our schools, actually, are built on an adult-centred rather than a child-centred mode. We would like to see that things be accessible to little children, that materials are accessible to them, not just to the adult but to them.

In terms of moving into a whole idea of having an energy centre for the school, many of our schools in Ontario do not have a well-stocked library that is personned by somebody who is full-time. We have quarter-day people, we have them run by children, we have people who are not qualified. We feel that in terms of the International Year of Literacy, which has been ratified across the world by UNICEF, the whole concept of having an energy centre in the school, a well-stocked library from which teachers can draw, is a critical issue that we would like to have addressed very seriously.

We feel that it is an obvious need, of course, to have the machinery of the 1990s in the classroom for children, and I cannot just say computers any more, because tomorrow there may be something else. In order for the child to stay current and be able to access information is very important at every age. It is not just happening up in the

secondary school. Little children now are communicating with each other across the world.

We would like also to talk in terms of advocating very strongly that there be outdoor learning spaces that reflect the size and needs of children. There are times that junior children, big children, play on little things, little children play on big things, and right now, as of this date today, 25 January 1990, there are no mandatory safety standards for playscapes in Ontario. This has become revealed to us in the last year.

If anything comes out of all these hearings, we hope that we have a mandatory safety standard. It is arbitrary. It is done on common sense, but there are no mandatory safety standards. We can take you hand in hand and show you where there are rusty bolts sticking out where children are hurt, where they fall on stones instead of sand, where there are cuts and bruises and things. There are no mandatory safety standards. We draw that to your attention if you did not already know that.

Moving on to item 9, partnerships is a very important issue for us. That is our job; we are people people.

The concept of the seamless day was brought up with you last week by the Ministry of Education. Because the three of us are heavily involved with several of the writing teams in the Ministry of Education, we underline, stamp, put great big exclamation marks behind the concept of the seamless day, the seamless day being the invisible boundary between child care, teacher and parent. This is why we advocate onsite child care whenever possible, and the whole idea of having, in terms of the partnership, cross-curricular partnerships as well.

We can go to boards of education in Ontario where the science co-ordinator does not know what the early childhood education co-ordinator thinks. The early childhood education co-ordinator, if there is such a person in a board—we will talk about that too—or a junior co-ordinator, if there is such a person in a board—it is very arbitrary. The leadership is arbitrary. In terms of partnerships, we would like to see professional dialogue be encouraged between people in our profession. This is why we have the Ontario Association of Junior Educators. We talk to each other. We would encourage that at a board level. We would certainly encourage that at the ministry level.

There are divisions that happen and interest groups form, and what happens is that their interests are taken care of, little empires are taken care of, and the cross-curricular discussion, the

professional dialogue, does not in fact happen every time. We would encourage professional dialogue.

Going into public awareness, we invite trustees to come into our schools. We invite trustees and parents and teachers to discuss the image of the learner. We invite parents who are invited to partake in meaningful ways as being our best advocates. We invite them to publicly articulate and support, rather than publicly undermine, the critical understanding of such things as, "play is the business of small children."

In conclusion, we have four points to make.

One is that, in terms of Peter's opening comments, we would encourage continued positive support for those of us in the front line. The job is tough.

The second point is that we would encourage and support the idea that, if we never arrive at the ideal, that is the strength of our system, because when we have arrived, we are at a dead end. We will continue to grow; we will never have come to the conclusion of what is the ideal. The ideal today is not the ideal of tomorrow. The idea of continuing this professional dialogue will help us to grow into the 1990s.

The third point is just to underline the idea that there is strength in diversity.

The fourth point is that professional dialogue such as this continues to move us forward and not regress into the future.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I have two questions at this point; there may be more. Just before we start, Peter, are you aware of any of the TV violence studies more recently than the early American work in the early 1970s?

Mr Rasokas: I am sorry. On violence?

The Chair: Television violence. I believe you mentioned the potential psychological trauma for latchkey kids at home behind locked doors watching television. I am wondering if there were any more recent studies than what I am aware of in the early 1970s.

Mr Rasokas: I cannot refer to any specific studies, although I am quite certain that, given an opportunity, we could probably present this committee with some appropriate documentation that would reflect that reality.

The Chair: We would appreciate that.

Mr Rasokas: I would be glad to do that.

The Chair: Are you aware of any studies dealing with the whole issue of portables and busing and the effect on kids? There seems to be a lot of discussion about that, but this committee has not been aware of any studies on the effect on

kinds of portables or busing, those two issues you raised.

Mr Rasokas: I will speak from a generic point of view. I am dealing with these situations on a day-to-day basis and I am referring to a personal context, if you will, although I am sure there are other colleagues of mine who would support what I am sharing with you.

The experience that I am having, and we were dealing with it this year in a very specific scenario, is that these portables are usually put out in the yard somewhere. By the end of October or in the spring they are usually surrounded by a great big lake of water and there is no way of getting any audio-visual equipment into these buildings, besides getting the caretaker or someone else to kind of juggle it out to the portable.

It is the idea of these portables coming to us with no curtains and very poor ventilation and these kids being really kind of locked into this steel metal box for the day.

I find that the educators who try to cope in those situations, and the children as well, are dealing with an environment that is not conducive to a comfortable, a warm, a gentle environment where children can gather around each other. There is dirt on the floors, there are tables and chairs that are not very functional. I have found that these structures are obviously economically very viable, but I do not think they are built for the child. They are built for the scenario of holding 30 youngsters in a contained space for the day.

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The Chair: I understand what you are saying. It may be a project for you to undertake, if anybody knows of any other studies. It might be helpful to strengthen your presentation to this committee, if you know of any studies that have determined an effect of the portable situation or any of those kinds of things, particularly on school—I mean, I think all of us have a perception about that, but I am just asking you. It might be helpful for you to consider that as a project or something that you could deal with more formally.

Mr Rasokas: I think perhaps because it has not been brought up as an issue or perhaps because it is not an issue that is a priority for many people, except for the fact that it is a priority for the children and the teachers, it has not been brought up as an area to investigate or an area to research. We would certainly be glad to look at that issue. We would certainly encourage you or the ministry to look at it as well.

The Chair: It is just that, as you may be in an advocate role, you might play a part.

Mr Rasokas: Yes. Thank you very much.

Mrs O'Neill: I would just like to ask a couple of very brief questions. Are you recognized on any of the ministry advisory committees?

Ms Pogue: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Would you tell us which ones you are represented on at the present time?

Ms Pogue: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Are you involved in any of the teacher education—

Ms Pogue: For example, Peter is on the development of exemplary programs advisory committee. I am involved with the child care advisory committee. Another member of our executive is on the multiculturalism committee.

Mrs Stief: Drugs.

Ms Pogue: The drug awareness committee, yes. Whenever there is a ministry—

Mrs O'Neill: What about the teacher education, the new structure that is in the Ministry of Education? Have you any input into that at the moment?

Ms Pogue: We have not been asked.

Mrs O'Neill: My second question is, could you give a very brief explanation of energy centres?

Ms Pogue: The concept of energy centre—it is a library. A good library is an energy centre.

Mr Jackson: I was very interested in the concept you shared with us, operational universality. As I try to build a stronger picture in my mind of what is meant by that, I wonder if we could explore that a little more.

You have not really addressed the jurisdictional difficulties of leap-frogging from the health care needs of a child from infancy to his first introduction to a supervised environment out of the home, which could be day care, could be in-school day care and then flip back to junior kindergarten and so on. We had some presentations that really disturbed us in terms of the breakdown.

But when I think of the concept of operational universality, I would like you to respond to where your thoughts are on some of the jurisdictional questions. Did I catch that all of you are working in faculty of education situations?

Ms Pogue: Yes.

Mr Jackson: Yes, very good. Can we talk a little more directly about that? I want to get into

some really good stuff in your brief, do not get me wrong, it is just that I want to get some feedback on that, which I did not get much of in your presentation.

Mr Rasokas: Again, I would have to relate to the experience that I have to show operational universality, because when these initiatives occur, they occur on paper to be very positive and reflective of the ideal, if you will. The reality is that different boards are at different stages of development, or have different levels of program development in terms of accessing younger children into their systems.

When we talk about operational universality, I think the subtleties of the province have to be addressed. The subtleties are that we are in a situation where we are offering half-day kindergartens. We do not have full-day kindergartens, we only have junior kindergartens. To do that, we need to build another 30 classroom spaces. Operational universality means that that money or that ability to make those spaces available is going to be very difficult for a smaller board such as Norfolk. That is where we run into our two levels, if you will, of education.

Mr Jackson: I have inquired as to whether or not the government has a clear and specific guideline that no child should receive junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten in a portable. We have clearly enunciated guidelines that it cannot occur for school-age day care. Those are built as brand new classrooms.

Do you have a clear recommendation as to whether or not this committee should be recommending that no school board should have a junior or a senior kindergarten operating in a portable environment? That is a hell of a leading question, but I would like it on the record, because we did not get clear answers from the ministry that situations occur—excuse me, I will correct the record—that situations could occur where a junior kindergarten environment would be operating in a portable.

Ms Pogue: We would strongly support the notion that junior and senior kindergarten not be held in a portable environment. If that is what you want on the record, the Ontario Association of Junior Educators will go on the record to support that.

Mr Jackson: You gave many examples as to the reasons why. It did not come across as a clear recommendation, and yet I am trying to find some. I am sure they exist. I just would like to know.

Ms Pogue: It is the whole concept of a kindergarten class. It is twice the size, usually, not always, of a regular elementary classroom.

Mr Jackson: Yes.

Ms Pogue: That in itself.

Mr Jackson: I am aware of the difficulties and of the loading factor requirements and space. I was a trustee for 10 years, so I am aware of that. I am just trying to find situations where boards, out of necessity, are operating their programs in that kind of environment.

What I am saying is that it is fundamentally wrong if we can say one mandated program must occur in this set of circumstances and yet we are not prepared to make that clear and unequivocal statement for junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten. Do you get where I am coming from? We are not having day care situations in portables. That is not allowed in this province. That has to occur within the school and the new spaces and capital is committed that it must be. In effect, it pops people out of the school in order to make room for it. So I just do not want it to be a junior or senior kindergarten. I am suggesting that is a recommendation I will be making, and research has noted that.

The Chair: Again, just for clarification, on the scale of things, are you saying that you would not recommend a kindergarten if it was in a portable, or on a higher plane, are you recommending that they not be held at all if the only option is portables?

Ms Pogue: We have not done any studies in terms of this. You are asking our opinion about it as educators and in terms of a response from our own experiences out in the field. You have just asked us a question for us to go back and find out from our association what our members believe. However, personally, we are responding to this.

The Chair: I appreciate that.

Ms Pogue: Personally, we are saying that, generally speaking, the primary division children are not even allowed to be housed in rooms on the second floor. In some cases, strange things happen and they are. We advocate that they be put into the safest environment; and the safest, most nurturing environment, housed in a facility that can take all the equipment of JK and SK, is not a portable.

The Chair: Okay. For clarification, I just wanted to have the difference between a program or having no program because the only option you have is a portable. The relative importance is something you could comment on, if you could, kids versus facilities. I think there is a balance.

Mrs Stief: Not to negate my position with OAJE, but with the type of portables that are capable of being made now where they are all

interlocking, they can become mini-schools within their own confines. If they can provide the kinds of things we are talking about, little toilets, little drinking fountains and all those kinds of things, I personally do not have any problem with that.

If the environment is such that it is conducive to a good learning climate for little children, I do not have any problem with that. If it is the kind of vision of a portable that Peter painted, with little kids on the rickety stairs, and we have all trouped out to those, then I would say no, I would not support that.

The Chair: So if building standards were in place, or common standards for a portable—

Ms Pogue: No, the common standard for a JK-SK classroom.

Mrs Stief: Yes, and it met the standard.

Ms Pogue: In terms of benchmarks, these are the benchmarks of the physical environment of the classroom. Then that becomes a mini-building, like a mini-centre itself.

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The Chair: Ms Poole had a supplementary as well, and then I will go back to you.

Ms Poole: This will be very quick, Cam, so you can get back to your questioning. I just wanted to clarify one thing.

My recollection of when the Ministry of Education people were asked this question last week was that their response was that nothing would prevent a junior kindergarten from being in a portable, as long as they had the plumbing facilities and everything else that needed to be put in, but what they thought would be much more likely to happen is that one or two of the older grades would be transferred into portables and then they would use that first-floor space within the original school for the kindergarten. That was one alternative the Ministry of Education said would probably happen in schools which presently do not have kindergartens and have space demand. So it might not come down to choosing whether to have kindergarten in the portable and not having the program. I think there are other ways around it.

Mrs Stief: But there are some centres where buildings in particular boards have been allocated at the moment just as housing for JK-SK because of the influx of children. Everybody in the school is either three, four or five years old, so some of those kids are obviously on the second floor and using facilities that are totally inappropriate just for their physical size.

Mr Jackson: I would like to move into busing, if I could. I appreciate your reference to safety standards for playground equipment. We also do not have safety standards for school buses in this province. They operate outside of the act, as you probably know.

Although I did a lot of work in this area, one of the things that became abundantly clear is that the younger the age and the smaller the child who we put on a school bus, the more we grapple with the same concept you shared with us on playground equipment, and it is even more crucial and far more life-threatening—do not get too nervous about that reference, Dianne—in that setting. Loading factors are different, the safety features and requirements, just the point at impact where the child becomes a projectile varies for a child in grade 8 or high school as opposed to these children. Three on a seat—I know Etobicoke, with the triple seatbelts and all of that.

Because nobody had really raised it and you have, could you help us with taking your points a little further? We are in the midst of a major review of busing financing, how we transfer funds to boards. There is a growing trend within the ministry to deal with the busing envelope of funds for all the kids—period, end of sentence.

Do you suggest, for example, that we should look at specific busing funds which recognize that these children have unique busing needs, not only in terms of distance, which is appropriate—and we have provincial guidelines—but also in terms of certain safety features, because safety features on buses still have a wider variance than should be acceptable in a province like ours which does so much busing?

In terms of the funding, the model that we are hearing coming out of the ministry is going to put on more pressure at a very time when we have lumped in a whole number of higher-risk, harder to serve, more frequent stops.

We could spend an hour on busing, but can we get some more specific kinds of recommendations to help guide our committee if we deal with this issue of the busing needs? We really have not gotten into it as a committee so far, and in case we do not, your thoughts on the record would be very helpful.

Ms Pogue: I will begin and then I think Valerie and Peter both have things to say about this.

The training of bus drivers is an arbitrary thing right now. In terms of the needs of the very small child and the older child, once again, it is the same as in—well, it certainly is not the same as an ECE trainer, but they spend time with these

children. If you have had any experience as a trustee, you know that it is very diverse in how they handle the children.

Mr Jackson: I am sorry to interrupt you, but if Richard Johnston was here, he would tell you his famous story about being let out the back door of a bus on a country road as a boy as a form of—

Ms Pogue: Discipline.

Mr Jackson: —frustration and discipline. Please continue. We are aware of some old practices that were rather harsh, but it illustrates very clearly your point. I am sorry to interrupt.

Ms Pogue: In some boards of education, I know that they call them together and they do dialogue and they do talk about children and they do that, but there is nothing mandated.

Also, there is the idea that there are some systems that have wonderful methods for transferring children, for lining up children for the readiness of the bus driver. I know of no study that has found the exemplary, but it would be an idea to find the exemplary and model it after it. Rather than it coming from the top down, come from the bottom up.

Mrs Stief: As a parent of a six-year-old and a four-year-old who get on buses at school, I would strongly support having buses that were allocated strictly for little children. It is hard, as a teacher, not to sign the permission form for the kids to go on a trip, knowing full well they are not getting into a vehicle that I feel comfortable with, and it is hard on me during the day until they are back home to know they are safe. I would strongly support that; that we have mini-buses or mini-vans or whatever is deemed the safest for kids of that age.

Mr Jackson: If you have ridden on a bus and seen them hit the brakes hard, which they have had to do, and every little tot slides right off—

Mrs Stief: Newton's third law.

Mr Jackson: —and we still have school buses that do not have padded backs or have the metal rim there. You have really put it back into perspective that now I am seeing even smaller children on them than I have been accustomed to viewing over my years in education.

Now that we think about it, we should look at whether or not there are standards for day care operators. To the extent that we have a child who has one standard when he gets on in the morning to go to day care, gets dropped off and then is picked up in a completely contradictory standard, that gets back to that sort of operational universality principle. I think I am getting better clarity in what you envisage there.

Mr Rasokas: I want to jump in on the busing, because I have a very personal reason for bringing that issue up. I work with a board where busing is a major form of getting children to and from school.

My children also go to a different board, where, when they were youngsters, and they still are, but when they were youngsters of five and six, they had to walk to school. I think it was 1.5 kilometres, but they had to go across a couple of intersections, past a high school, and there were a few scenarios which I was not comfortable with as a parent. When I spoke to the board about that situation, it felt it was living by ministry guidelines in terms of distance from school and it was up to me to get my children to school in any way I could manage. It was very difficult for me to feel comfortable sending my five-year-old off to school in the morning, having to do all of these various crossings and go past these very busy school sites and what not.

I would hope that this committee would re-examine those expectations and, if you will, deal with it on the basis that right now boards may provide busing. As a parent, I had no option, beyond just personal lobbying of trustees. Finally, after three years, we were able to acquire busing for our children. Now they walk back and forth. They are eight and 10 and they are quite comfortable making that trek, but when they were five and six, that was not a viable process.

Dealing with safety on buses too, I agree with you wholeheartedly about the seats, the way they are built, the safety factors in movement, the lack of restraints. We expect kids to be buckled up in cars.

Mr Jackson: It is the law.

Mr Rasokas: It is the law, and yet I agree, it is very hair-raising if you consider the possibilities of what might happen in certain circumstances if that bus collides with another vehicle or whatever. I rode a bus all my life as a student and I can recall some very sensitive situations, as Richard, I suppose, has talked about as well.

Mr Jackson: I am sorry with respect to time, I would like to go further, but I would like to make a request of research. If possible, I would like us to pursue information about the following:

Because this is an optional program, it does have an implication with respect to busing and I would like to get some clarity on that in terms of finance grant. Do they qualify for busing grants or do they not? That is a basic question. If it is optional, does that in any way affect their funding? That is my first question.

Second, can we somehow determine if in fact there are programs being offered where there is not busing, such as we know occurred with the evolution of French-language instruction, French immersion, where there are varying approaches taken to whether you have access? I would like us to know if there is a consistent regulation or a consistent set of guidelines that have to be followed now or if it is the government's intention, because I can see a potential for a recommendation there.

The final point is the one I referenced earlier, and that is with respect to the varying standards that might operate for day care in any setting and standards for—

The Acting Chair (Ms Poole): Standards specifically regarding busing and day care or general standards?

Mr Jackson: Busing regulations. I am sure there are busing regulations for these children.

We may find out that they must be seatbelted. I do not know. We may find that out. How can we say that in the morning a child must be seatbelted and must operate in a certain fashion but in the afternoon that standard goes out the window?

I am sorry, that is a fair bit of research, but this is a whole new area that I think we should not proceed to conclusion without having investigated, and I thank you. There is more I wanted to get into. It was a good brief.

The Acting Chair: Perhaps, since we could get some of these answers through the Ministry of Education, Dr Gardner can talk to Dr Perry and they can laise as to who gets what for us.

I would like to thank the Ontario Association of Junior Educators for appearing before us today and making a very significant contribution to our deliberations.

The committee recessed at 1221.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1412 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

ÉDUCATION DE LA PETITE ENFANCE (suite)

The Chair: Okay, we have concurrence to proceed; I thank our member in the hall.

I appreciate that we have with us as our first presenter today Christopher Trump, the executive director of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, and I appreciate also that you have a colleague with you. Perhaps you will introduce him. The floor is yours.

Mr Trump: Thank you. It is a privilege for me to be here as well.

The Chair: Excuse me, sir, perhaps you do not mind sitting; the microphone picks it up better. Thank you.

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY OF ONTARIO

Mr Trump: I noticed you did a bit of a doubletake at the name. Truthfully, the first time I heard it, it came out as ACAATO and I thought I had reached a Japanese restaurant. It is used either as an acronym or, as something to pronounce, we now answer the telephone by saying "association of colleges."

My colleague who is with me is our director of academic services, Ron Chopowick, who I am delighted is at my back because he is indeed the expert on the topic which is before you: early childhood education.

What I would like to speak to, as executive director of the association, is the broader strategic implications of what we are engaged in. There is no question that day care is a burning public issue in Ontario, in Canada and indeed in North America. I believe that in the United States Senate, the majority leader of the Senate has put that as number two on his agenda after clean air. It is also refreshing to see that clean air is number one on his agenda.

People are concerned with both the availability and the competence of service for infants and preschoolers. In the provincial context this creates a bit of a dichotomy in the sense that you have two ministries involved. Up until age four

and a half, the Ministry of Community and Social Services presides over the welfare of youngsters and has come up with some rather rigorous requirements. For practitioners who care for infants, there must be one for every three infants. If they are toddlers, which I would presume to be past infants but not quite up to being out of diapers, you need a practitioner for every five. For youngsters up to prekindergarten, it is one for every eight. So there are already some rather rigorous standards set just in terms of the number of youngsters, who in fact are our most precious resource, in the hands of practitioners.

This changes abruptly once the child enters early kindergarten. There you have some 20 youngsters under the care of a teacher, and at that point the Ministry of Education moves in to preside over the child's next years, up through secondary school, or indeed post-secondary.

The real issue in early childhood is one of caring for and nurturing the youngsters. I would submit that Ontario's colleges over the past two decades have forged a rather significant record in this regard. The child care practitioners who have been graduated have represented the highest standards in such delivery.

The situation at present is one of considerable investment on the part of Ontario taxpayers. I do not have the exact amount, but it has to be hundreds of millions. In 22 colleges from Cornwall to Thunder Bay, from South Porcupine to Windsor to Hamilton, there are early childhood education centres, 45 of them all told because Seneca College here in the Metro area has five in its own right and Humber has put in a new one.

I saw the new one at Confederation College in Thunder Bay. They have a brand new advanced technology building and one wing of it is dedicated to early childhood education. I thought that was a rather neat symmetry, to take the two imperatives for our province, the care of preschoolers and the education of those who are about to enter the professional world in a very vital area and put them under one roof.

Currently, close to 3,000 students are enrolled in these programs, with some 4,000 certificate and diploma holders graduated since 1985. The students perhaps represent an even more critical investment by the province, because they are the human beings who are involved in delivering early childhood education. Many of them, I would submit, since the colleges are diffused

throughout the province, are practitioners in the north, in native communities and in the ethnic inner cities, where the need is just as critical as it is in the neighbourhoods where many of us live.

The greatest challenge facing college students today is creeping credentialism. What we mean by that phrase is the increased push for professionalization, all of it presented as being in the public interest, but all of it also meaning that drawbridges are being raised.

The consequence, as we look at the records of enrolment, is that the college enrolment is in a steady state but in danger of being eroded. The reason for this is that young people are a lot smarter than we give them credit for. We may say, "It is perfectly worthy to go to college," and they may nod their heads and say, "Yes, that is right." But when they consider their own lives and they know that careers are bound to advancement, they have to conclude that the baccalaureate has become the coin of the realm or is becoming the coin of the realm in this area of early childhood education.

Ontario's college graduates, as I have said, have documented competence, but they are often intimidated once they finish with the diploma or certificate. They go out, they work and they realize that now they would like to go on for their baccalaureate. With the exception of only Ryerson, every university in Ontario, 17 universities, will give them the back of the hand and say, "Go back to square one."

I would submit that is intimidating for the young people and it is an enormous waste of taxpayers' money to have invested three years in the education of someone in a college, and then say, "Let's compound that with even more years in university." It also means that over time the certificates and diplomas of the colleges will become ever less the coin of the realm, which in fact means an investment will be left as an empty shell. As I say, that is the challenge, the problem, the danger.

The recommendation I would like to leave with you is that we really do have a rare opportunity. There are wonderful programs, given in universities and colleges, in early childhood education. Would it not be better if we could develop some linkages, a stitching together of these programs to forge a model of early childhood education delivery in North America?

1420

First, I would submit we need a focus, and second, we need persons of goodwill to apply this focus on results, to build bridges rather than raise drawbridges, to put it into an analogy.

It is surprising when talking with colleagues in the college system that these issues have not really been addressed in a substantive way or in a codified way. For example, what is early childhood education, this caring and nurturing of preschoolers? It would be marvellous to have that definition. Flowing from that, what are the standards of delivery and who should be permitted to deliver early childhood education? Finally, how best to certify programs that educate its practitioners? That perhaps might even be the easiest job. The most difficult job is to make it work.

I would submit that we could get a task force together made up of representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, universities, colleges, the private sector and parents, not too large a task force in terms of numbers but certainly representative of those who can achieve the results. The key to the effort should be directed towards an attitude of adaptability and flexibility that can extend and rearrange existing structures. That all reads very simply, but as you know it is very difficult to achieve, perhaps particularly so in academia, where I have spent the better part of 16 years of my life at this juncture.

The ultimate objective should be a format for early childhood education that draws on the greatest pool of talent from accredited programs rather than solely from certified individuals. The reason for this is that accreditation diffuses these standards or, let's say, empowers the delivery of individuals who uphold these standards to institutions such as colleges, and universities of course, and the colleges stand ready to submit and to be involved in such accreditation. The real danger with certifying individuals is that over time you will limit entry to these certified individuals, which means that in fact you are limiting the pool of talent.

I would also add in conclusion that college graduates will continue under such an arrangement to contribute to an expansion of services to all parts of Ontario, in effect a competent, cost-effective, widely diffused delivery of early childhood education. In our collective view at the association, speaking on behalf of all the presidents of the 23 colleges in Ontario, that is something that would truly serve the public interest.

That is the extent of my formal remarks. I would be delighted to discuss the issue further.

The Chair: We have interest to discuss the issue further. Before we start, I would like to see if I have the notion of how we got into the

difference between universities and community colleges. When they were set up it was basically for kids coming out of grade 12 who were interested in technology-type training, whether that be early childhood education, audio-visual, whatever, and it was never intended for the two streams to mix; that is, the folks who went to community college and the folks who went to university.

That was dealt with, I understood, at the time in that the teaching masters were basically people who had been tradespeople, who were excellent in their fields, who were moving along and who decided they would like to get into teaching and dealing in the community college atmosphere, whereas the universities were basically doctoral, had gone through a doctorate degree and had dealt with that.

Informally now, though, virtually every president of a college is a PhD graduate, virtually most of the administration, and now a number of people with at least master's degrees—probably not the same proportion as at universities but pretty close, I think. Pedagogically there is really no difference in the credentials situation. As well, the number of students you take from grade 13 who are intending to go to university now are going to community colleges in larger numbers, or at least until the recent past.

It strikes me that things have got a little out of skew as to the original philosophy. I wonder if you could comment on that.

Mr Trump: I think you are absolutely on the mark. Something has happened since the original concept was committed to, and it was an enormous investment. Initially, it was like out of whole cloth. You had some 22 colleges, now with a 23rd added, come forward.

It probably did not work on purely human terms. The minute you set up a dichotomy, the best will go to university and all others to colleges. What happened? You immediately had more universities set up—Laurentian University and Brock University—and inevitably pressures built up, "Surely my child should go to university," and you had this enormous infusion of students to universities which continues unabated to this day and in fact is accelerating.

How to get at that? Linkages have to be built. We can no longer talk of two solitudes because young people will continue to vote with their feet and say, "College is good for someone else, but I want..." and indeed this has been documented by a survey which the Metro colleges commissioned last year by Burwell Hay; a big thick report. One of my habits as a journalist is to distil what they

are getting at. What the young people who were interviewed were getting at was: "University is a wide vista, a broad horizon where we have many opportunities. College is a narrow tunnel that comes to a dead end." Again, it is anecdotal almost, but it was a thread that went all the way through this survey.

To address it, one should not go holus-bolus the route of, for example, Quebec. However worthy the *collège d'enseignement général et professionnel* program is, to insist that everyone leave grade 11 and then go to a college is not the route I would recommend for Ontario. The British Columbia model, at least as I see it at the moment, is that they want to have over the next decade every college in a position to be granting degrees.

Given the richness of the university system in Ontario—17 universities and there are many more campuses—and the investment in the colleges, I think that a route that permits this laddering, as it is called at times, or linkages, is the one that makes the most sense; also, however, the most difficult. We had the experience in another field in the north where Laurentian University and Cambrian College—the presidents had shaken hands on nursing, "Let's get together." In December, I was shocked to see that the senate had shot it down.

It might need a bit of encouragement to show the faculties, "It is in your interest not to be inundated at the outset with students." Perhaps we could turn the valve back a bit on the basic income unit funding for incoming students and open it to a much greater extent to admit students at a secondary or tertiary level where they are motivated, in many cases, where they have work experience and where they know what they want. As I recall from my university days, it is a pleasure to teach students like that.

You could make a case that almost comes out as win-win. Getting back to early childhood education, it is a perfect example of where one could start because there is a great public need for these practitioners and a great benefit, both to universities and to colleges, in forging some linkages.

The Chair: It is ironic that you mention the Cambrian-Laurentian situation. It was brought about because students going to Lake Superior State College and having the full credit for nursing were being charged the same tuition as if they were not out-of-Michigan-state students and therefore, except for the dollar exchange, were getting the same tuition and living costs at Lake Superior State College and people were starting

to think: "Wait a minute. If half of our nursing graduates in Cambrian College are going to Lake Superior State for a BScN, coming back, passing the exams"—I don't know what the difference is. Anyway, thank you.

1430

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is always good to get an idea of where Vision 2000 is going at the moment. I appreciated your presentation on early childhood education. It may well be that the only outcome of this committee is to suggest a task force of some sort to try to come to grips with some of the issues you are talking about. I am desperately trying to get information now that can help me make some decisions, as well. What I do not have from you and what I would really like is some more specific information about the standards of education at the college level at the moment on early childhood education. I do not know if you are going to be of assistance on this or not, but we have had information now from Centennial College, Warden Woods campus, in my riding; we have the calendar here from Ryerson, after the committee went there yesterday, and as you say, almost all the colleges have ECE instruction. I want to know how consistent the programs are across the community college spectrum in terms of the amount of the particular curriculum, as well as the amount of field practice that is undertaken.

Mr Trump: That is, in fact, a fair question, which I would submit is part of what this task force should be doing. At the moment, I am afraid we would not have a single volume that would say, "These are the standards followed by each of the colleges in the delivery of early childhood education." But I believe, as Carolyn Warberg of Centennial, who spoke here on Monday—she has wrestled it to earth, at least in so far as it concerns Centennial and has shown absolute congruence between what is offered at Centennial and, for example, what is offered at Guelph University. The shocking thing is that the Centennial three-year diploma holders are advised by Guelph University to go back to square one. Now again, that is not the definitive answer that you want, but my view is that is one that has to be got at before you can begin to move into this closer stitching together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I would want to know why we do not have a better idea of the coherence of the programs at the community colleges or the disparate nature of them. I find it hard to understand, after this many years of providing early childhood education, with the evolution of the program—in fact, they are

moving a great deal more into developmental theory from just the straight nurturing, custodial kinds of emphasis in the early days—why we do not have a better idea of what the various colleges are doing and what the relative expectations and standards are from the various colleges.

Mr Trump: I believe that before you leave this issue—and I am not the one to give it to you because I do not have it and I do not believe it exists at the moment, but we can certainly get this. The reasons perhaps flow from the fact that the colleges grew like Topsy. For years, there was a continual inflow of students and I would submit—and this is simply notional on my part—that the programs delivered quality, because it is expressed in the marketplace. But I think the time has come, certainly, when we are looking for better linkages with the universities to spell that out more precisely on paper. I will carry that back to my colleagues, that we must do that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just cannot understand, frankly, how it is that we can be fighting the equivalency fight, if that is the case, when we do not have an idea of the standards within your own system, to be able to then judge what is going on at the faculties of education versus what is going on at Ryerson.

For instance, when I look at the Ryerson calendar for the first two years and I am look at the Centennial College curriculum, it is quite straightforward to me why it is they are able to accept the two years at Centennial as equivalent to those two years and that, on an individual basis, then students might be accepted into third year at Ryerson. I would suggest that one of the reasons, though, they probably have to place such a heavy emphasis on the individual being screened rather than just on a straight acceptance of the credits is that there may be, from what I am hearing here, vast or unknown differences between graduates of other early childhood education courses across the province and in the colleges, and that seems to me to be relatively self-defeating when you are then trying to get some acceptance of equivalency.

Mr Trump: I agree with you. I think that is absolutely foremost, and really, accreditation means just that. You do not get accredited until you pass that standard which passes muster in the opinion of those who set the standards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is anybody working on this currently within the community college system to actually try to gather information which would compare and contrast?

Mr Trump: Let me ask Ron.

Dr Chopowick: Thank you for the opportunity. We do have a college task force under the chairmanship of Brian Desbiens, president of Sir Sandford Fleming, and he is communicating consultant with Terence Grier. One of the issues that we have addressed is the fact that we have to have system coherence and system standards, and this has to be done in-house, and then we can approach the universities, which have their own variations.

So we have the problem on both sides, and of course you realize that the colleges grew to serve very different communities. They have different budget constraints, different realities, so out of all this autonomy and individualism came programs that are similar and congruent, but you can find differences. Sometimes when people are looking for the differences to make or not make a case, they say, "Well, this program is different." They do differ, but in essence the substance of the programs, the nature of the programs, is pretty close.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Surely, they can be different. I am not saying that there cannot be variety of methods of delivering a program, and that is whether it is the college or the university level. But it seems to me that there should be some kind of expectation or some sort of uniformity around practicum requirements, the amount of course work which will be done on curriculum and, therefore, the educational component.

Your presentation talks very much of the community and social services kind of expectation of child care, which is now sort of dated against the reality of what most people are being taught and, in fact, the way the centres are operating. They see themselves as educators as much as custodians these days, and I guess I would expect, as a minimum, some kind of notion of what is the curriculum kind of emphasis, what is the developmental theory kind of emphasis, so that we would have a better idea of what we are dealing with.

I take your point as very well made about the differences in the universities. If I look at a place like Ryerson, what it is doing in four years, and put that up against a faculty of education program for somebody who is going to teach kindergarten these days, I would just say that I cannot imagine how anyone could say that the faculty of education graduate is going to be as well prepared as the person who has gone through the program at Ryerson.

So I do take it as a point well taken, but I would have hoped that both systems at this stage, the faculty of education side of things as well as yours, would have had some idea of what the range of expectation is within your various programs, and neither you—and certainly from our discussion with the person representing the deans, the faculties themselves do not seem to have a much clearer idea yet either about their standards.

Mr Trump: If I may, Ron, the fact that the three points of focus are as simple as they are speaks volumes to what has not been done. It has been a field that has just grown, and suddenly it is upon us. I would submit the greater obligation is on the colleges since the universities hold the high ground. If we should lead the way in terms of getting our act together, what does Sault College, what does St Clair College, what does early childhood education come up with? Something that then can be presented for accreditation. It really is a process then, that goes beyond individual whim and depending on which side of bed somebody got up on, saying, "Well, we'll admit you and we'll not admit the next person."

I hear what you are saying and we will carry it back. I think the association is the one that ought to be doing that, acting as a focal point to draw this information out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Those are all my questions. The Desbiens and Grier communication is being done as part of that, is it? I was not sure about that. Is that sort of a community college task force headed by the president of Sir Sandford Fleming?

1440

Dr Chopowick: Terry Grier from the Council of Ontario Universities, on his side, is looking at relationship issues.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So he is not there on behalf of Ryerson; it is on behalf of the COU.

Dr Chopowick: On behalf of COU.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is their reporting schedule? What are they supposed to be reporting and when?

Dr Chopowick: We are scheduled to meet in March, the two groups meeting together.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is this the first meeting of the two groups together?

Dr Chopowick: Yes. We have been meeting on our own, developing a position and a recognition of issues. I guess I should add for the record that we are beginning dialogue with the ministry people with regard to ECE laddering of

programs. Once you begin that, there is almost a requirement that you begin to do and address what you are saying, and that is: "Now we are beginning to talk. What is the issue on the table? What are we talking about?"

The Vice-Chair: Who does the accrediting right now? Who is responsible for the accreditation at the present time?

Mr Trump: There is none. We are at the point of beginning and it needs some encouragement to move the process along.

Miss Nicholas: It is a great opportunity to speak today, and I am really glad you have come before us. I am a university graduate, but I have always been a great admirer of the college programs. Centennial College is the college that serves Richard's and my ridings. I have been very impressed with the initiatives it has undertaken, which I have really become aware of, even more so in the last two and a half years. The placement is excellent—as I understand it, a very high placement—and the variety of programs is very practical.

My husband is a college graduate in the certified general accountant program, so I start from that. I even have—I put my conflict of interest here—a daughter who is part of the childhood care program. She goes to day care at a college, Centennial College, and early childhood education teachers and students are the ones who look after her. They do a fabulous job, much better than I could ever do.

Mr Trump: That is what needs to get out to the public more, happy customers.

Miss Nicholas: I know they do painting; my fridge is full. They do unique activities. They go out and choose a pumpkin before Hallowe'en. They have been over at the recreation centres. They go for walks, and there is stimulation constantly for them. I know the ratio is very good and they do a great job.

I know also that it is much more expensive to have your child there than in a home where someone is looking after three or four children and doing it as a homemaker or something along those lines. I know someone who has a child in a home, and I can say that I feel the extra money is worth what my child is certainly having when she goes there. So that is where I start from.

I wonder how we can attract more into the program. I know you are saying accreditation, but if we have this attitude that colleges are not going to be as practically used, that their graduates do not have a good chance of making as much money as university graduates or that the

jobs they will get are less stimulating, how else can you get that message out other than my saying that they are doing a great job?

I know the accreditation is being recognized, and that is something we should certainly move to more, and certainly that should be looked at more vigorously, but I just do not know how. Why has the message not got out? What is the main problem there? From what I can see from what Centennial College is doing, they are doing a fabulous job.

Mr Trump: I think the main problem is that it is simply linked to human aspiration, career limitation. It would be me, it would be anyone. If you say, "University graduates have a chance to go this high, but you go here and you have a chance to go that high," which choice would you make? That is why the issue is so vital, precisely in the context that it was presented.

We do not necessarily mean that everyone who is in a college program will go on to university, but the mere fact that you know it is available without having to go back to square one will encourage students to say, "I think that is a pretty neat program at Centennial or Confederation." It is simply the feeding of the aspirations, if you will. That is really what we are up against. And it is not just in this field; it is in certified engineering, technicians and technologists, social work, accounting, nursing. We have a big job ahead.

What we need, in my view, is to show in one of these, "Here is the way in which it can be done," and frankly, I think the early childhood education is a perfect fit. There is an enormous need in society for it. There is a huge investment already in place. The record of college graduates confirms it. I agree with Mr Johnston's viewpoint that something needs to be done to show documentary evidence that they are worthy of accreditation. Once that is in place, that is when the tide will begin to turn, in my view.

Miss Nicholas: What are you doing at the high school level or at the grade school level to encourage them to—you might have said this in the first 10 minutes; I was out in the rain—

Mr Trump: No, I did not, actually.

Miss Nicholas: —to get teachers who are probably university educated themselves, who maybe have not had enough access to the colleges, to suggest that as an alternative? You have a variety of students, but if I could premise that, maybe the students you get are people who feel they are not quite capable of university. You offer a unique program and that is why they are there, and if there was an opportunity to move on

to university, if that is what they wanted, they could tackle college and then find out that really they could go on to a more intense program.

Mr Trump: I would like to have Dr Chopowick address that because that is one of his principal roles, but let me add one thing. At the moment, the applications to colleges are almost approaching 15 per cent from university graduates, and the enrolment is five per cent university graduates, which is an accolade of sorts saying that college programs are worth while. The difficulty is, do we really want that much time expended, to have young people warming the school bench for that amount of time?

On your question on secondary school linkage, I will let Ron tell you a bit about what we are doing there.

Dr Chopowick: Just to recapitulate what has been said a lot in the media, we do have a values and attitude problem in society. The teachers themselves in the elementary and secondary schools, by and large, are products of the university system, so we have to meet that problem head on.

One of the initiatives we are working on, which we hope to have in place this fall, is something called Partners in Education, where we go into the schools and act as resource people; not marketing the college system, but resource people helping with the education programs; not teaching, but assisting. We could have English teachers helping with grammar presentations, science fairs, computer simulations, business clubs. We have a wealth of expertise.

The question the people from the school system ask me is, "What have you got?" and I say, "What do you need?" They say, "What does it cost?" and I say, "Not much."

Again, we are beginning the dialogue, and they have found that the concept is exciting—not that it has not been happening that we have teachers going in and participating. That has been happening for as long as I have been in the system, for 19 years, but we want to formalize it, recognize it and nurture it and push the contacts down to grades 5 and 6 and especially grades 7, 8 and 9, the transitional years. If we get down there and we appear as role models, we are selling what society needs—not just what the colleges can present but what society needs—I think we will accomplish a great deal in the next few years.

Miss Nicholas: If it is any consolation, just as a final note, my husband makes far more than I, and he is a college graduate. I thought I would

end on that note, but then again I guess we could say that a lot, could we not?

The Chair: It is not hard to make more than we do.

Miss Nicholas: Yes.

1450

Mr Neumann: I come from a community which values post-secondary education very highly: the city of Brantford, the community of Brant county. We were left out in the expansion of colleges and universities in the 1960s and have been striving to see a greater presence for post-secondary education.

I will start my questioning in that area because of great interest in it. I notice that Mohawk College, which has a geographic responsibility, as do all colleges, about a decade ago started to respond in a major way to serve the Brantford community. We now have a significant branch campus there which now offers full programs rather than just retraining programs. One of the programs is the early childhood education program.

The universities, which do not have any geographic responsibility to communities around them, have been very, very hard to persuade to offer anything in our community. They will come in and raid the market when they see a chance to offer first-year courses here and there, or correspondence courses, but they do not come in and say, "What does the community need?" whereas the colleges do that. So I commend Mohawk, and in commending Mohawk, commend you for the role that colleges play. I think it is partly because of their geographic mandate. Do you think universities should have such a mandate?

Mr Trump: Yes, and in some respects the creation of the new universities addresses that: Laurentian, Brock. I thank you too for your bit of a pat on the back for the colleges because I do think that is taken seriously. Taking another community, Thunder Bay, Confederation College has an area the size of France and is probably a leader in Canada in terms of distance education and fulfilling its mandate. So it is something we do take seriously.

Universities are a bit different in the sense that they are, by and large, research institutions. They also have baccalaureate students. But the imperative to diffuse becomes much more difficult for them because of the library resources, the research facilities. The universities almost by their nature kind of insist, "Come to us," and in that sense it would be more difficult

for them, unless a critical mass is achieved in terms of population or otherwise, to have a full-fledged campus. I say this perhaps in defence of why they have not been as alert to these opportunities as the colleges.

Mr Neumann: Recently our community went through a period of trying to find a way to expand the campus locally and perhaps bring a university presence. We asked a local committee set up by the Minister of Colleges and Universities to ask the five universities closest to us if they would go into some kind of a partnership with Mohawk and develop a unique kind of partnership campus in the Brantford area. None of the universities expressed an interest. They said, "We've all got our own objectives and priorities."

The only degree-granting institution that showed any interest, and there was dialogue going on, was Ryerson. So there is potential for a Mohawk-Ryerson co-operation in the Brantford area, and I was not surprised to hear of the co-operation that we heard about at this committee yesterday in terms of Ryerson's co-operation in recognizing the credits of colleges in the area of early childhood education.

What I want to know is when students graduate from one of these programs in the college and want to go on to a university, are those students entirely on their own or do the colleges attempt to go to bat for them in getting the universities to recognize the credits they have earned in the early childhood education programs?

Mr Trump: I do not have a definitive answer on that question in the sense that I suspect it is very much on an individual initiative too, that a faculty member or dean will be in touch with a counterpart at the university and say, "This is a clearly outstanding student," and at best you might then gain a year's credit to move into that university program.

Coming back to your other issue, that five universities turned down the proposal, there is a marvellous program in the works east of Toronto, at Durham College. The president, Gary Polonsky, moved heaven and earth to build a liaison with York University, Trent University and Ryerson. They are in fact now on the Durham campus offering several degree programs. Simply the propinquity factor, as I call it—the closeness, being near to each other—shows what you had asked. They see they are providing substance in their courses, and there is high hope through this effort that there will be a bridge-building that otherwise might not have occurred.

I suspect it happened in Durham because Gary Polonsky is a very energetic person, and he

picked up the telephone and called and personally said, "Can we meet and talk?" So I would not give up on it. I think if you are rebuffed once, use the model of Robert the Bruce and try again.

Mr Neumann: Are there any degree-granting institutions in Ontario other than Ryerson which have accepted the college credits for early childhood education?

Mr Trump: Lakehead University will be the next place. That is in Thunder Bay. There again it is because Lakehead has a very energetic president who believes in this: Bob Rosehart. Confederation College has Roy Murray. They have done wonders, just the two of them. Then again, they are the only game in town. In fact, they are the only game in an area the size of France. In that case, vicissitude makes for closer co-operation.

Mr Neumann: I am a historian by profession and you are espousing the strong personality or leadership theory of history.

Dr Chopowick: Could I just add to that? Seneca and York University have had what we call a concurrent ECE relationship too. We would not want to leave them out.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That's only for the concurrent.

Mr Neumann: Do I have time for a couple more?

The Chair: One more.

Mr Neumann: One subject that interested this committee was the need for programs which train the professional people who will be working with young children to be aware of current social issues. Of two that came to mind, one was the importance of the early identification of at-risk children, such as those who might develop learning disabilities, and the other, which was mentioned this morning, was the issue of violence in the family and how you identify that when you are working in a day care centre.

Do you think the community colleges have sufficiently addressed those kinds of issues in designing curriculum for early childhood education, or is there more work yet to be done?

Mr Trump: What do you say, Ron?

Dr Chopowick: There is always work to be done. I am sure you realize that we have very active and effective advisory committees which are, in effect, employers of our graduates. So reflecting on what is going on in society—I know they constantly change the curriculum; they revise it and do not wait until there is a

demonstrated push. So I would say that we are probably not far behind where we should be.

Mr Neumann: Can you think of some colleges that you would say are leaders in this area?

Dr Chopowick: Centennial. I will leave it at Centennial.

Mr Trump: I am taking notes too, because I think that is a point well taken, certainly in terms of what I will be doing in getting the collective input of the colleges. I think that is a very important issue.

Mr Neumann: We had presentations before us which indicated that earlier identification and earlier intervention can have potentially a very large payback for society in terms of prevention. I think one comment was made about the studies of youth in their middle to late teens who were street kids, and many of them were learning disabled who probably did not get identified early enough. If they had been, they would not be problems in society.

Mr Trump: By the time they start school, you have already lost the game.

Mr Neumann: So there is a tremendous potential for gain here.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We are going to be hearing from l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario, and I wanted to know how many of the community college programs for early childhood education are in French in the province.

Dr Chopowick: Four.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In Ottawa—

Mr Trump: Northern, Ottawa, Confederation—

Interjection: Did you say Cambrian?

Dr Chopowick: Niagara.

Mr Trump: That is right. Niagara.

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Mrs O'Neill: Gentlemen, I think you are modest. I feel every time we hear from the community colleges, they tend to be a very modest group. I happen to have a husband who has devoted 20 years of his life to the community college in my community, in many roles, and I feel that he is modest himself.

I am glad you mentioned the advisory committees. I do feel your perceptions are very correct. The career limitations, particularly in the subject area we are discussing, are very much part of this whole mix. I do think certain individuals in

certain communities can make the difference, as you have suggested.

I do know that the community college in my area is accepted, certainly by the school boards, as a very viable and admirable alternative to any other form of post-secondary. In that community, the teachers and/or department heads sit on vocational advisory committees of school boards. Some of the sabbaticals from the community college are taken within a high-school setting. All of that I think is very healthy.

I certainly hope you will be successful in what you are describing as an extremely big task that you are going into. I do not think there have been enough requests from community colleges for research funding. I know you have some small grants or funds coming out of the Premier's Council, the centres of excellence and those kinds of experiences.

I really do feel there is a lot of area for research at the community colleges. I think many of the teachers—and now I think the new term is "professors"; some of them have certainly had academic training as well as training of a practical nature—are very capable of some pretty good research. I would like to see community colleges more into that realm. I do think if we say so, it will certainly raise the profile and status within any community, certainly in the community I am from, which happens to be Ottawa.

Those are my remarks. I was very interested to hear what you said about five per cent of the college enrolment being from university graduates. I knew some of that; I did not know exactly what the figures were.

My only question is, do you have any records, particularly in the area we are discussing today, ECE, of people who have returned to the college, that is, people who are retraining in this career or in preparation for a new career? Do you keep statistics on that? Would you be able to tell me in this particular subject area how many people are taking it as a second career or a return-to-work career?

Dr Chopowick: If I could just speak from my Seneca experience, I would say a third to a half.

Mrs O'Neill: Is that right? In this particular program it is that high?

Dr Chopowick: But you have to keep in mind that there are admission-filtering systems that might be at work here. So you do not turn people away, but when you have your admissions counselling process, it may result in potential students making choices different from their original applications.

Mrs O'Neill: But some of those people would be changing program, you are saying, or some of them you would put in the same category who are returning to a new career.

Dr Chopowick: Yes, as mature students.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wanted to say one other thing which I think you are very modest about and which I do not think is well known in the communities, that is, the level to which your professional development has increased and expanded, the kind of provincial subject-area meetings you have and the exchanges that go on between colleges. Those do not happen in the school year as much. We do not have the whole school closing down and a professional development day being known throughout the community as we do in elementary and secondary.

I think many people within the community do not realize the acceleration and expansion of the program of professional development, which I hope will continue to increase but which I know has increased greatly, and much of it is very high profile stuff. So I think you should be blowing your own horn a little more.

Mr Trump: If I may, it is perhaps not telling stories out of school, but I also served on the steering committee at the Council of Regents' Vision 2000, which is a very stimulating intellectual exercise, and the word "research" came up at one of our meetings. It was as if you had stuck a tack under some of the people sitting around the table. For the better part of an hour the discussion turned on research as the purview of the universities.

It went back and forth and they finally settled on, we will call it, applied research at the colleges, because in fact there is some significant research going on, particularly the example that was given at Sir Sanford Fleming, which leads in Canada in aquaculture. If you do not need to research to excel in aquaculture, to prepare trout this size for the finest restaurants in Toronto, just as one example—there are barriers that have nothing to do with the facts; they have to do with the perceptions, with the traditions, with the hundreds of years of history of the universities and their role, none of which I discount because I too am a university graduate.

But I am saying there is a new age and there is a new post-secondary education delivery system. Let's talk and see where we can co-operate. I would say if they can agree on applied research, fine, let's build on that.

Mrs O'Neill: Small steps.

Mr Trump: Yes.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon, Ron and Chris. I appreciate it.

Mr Trump: You are welcome.

The Vice-Chair: Our next presenter is Noel Young from George Brown College. First of all, welcome to the committee. I notice you are from George Brown College.

Mr Young: I am a faculty member at George Brown College. I am here as an individual however.

The Vice-Chair: Great. Thank you very much.

Mr Young: But I am glad I came early and had an opportunity to hear all these comments. It is gratifying.

I would like to underline the importance of articulation. Certainly for my students, to be able to apply to university and have some credit for their work is essential. It is an incredibly frustrating academic barrier for them not to be able to get any credit for the many hours of work they do in our program.

The Vice-Chair: We will listen to your presentation and then we will open up for questions, if you wish.

NOEL YOUNG

Mr Young: As I said, I am here speaking as an individual. Before coming to the college system in 1986, I worked for two years as a child care adviser in the child care unit of the North York Board of Education, working with parent groups who were setting up community-based child care programs in their neighbourhood schools.

Before that time, I was a supervisor of a kindergarten and school-aged child care program in an alternative school in Toronto. As one of the alternative schools, we also had a full-day kindergarten program. In that we also served the local neighbourhood school and we worked in close collaboration with the half-day kindergarten program as well.

Currently, I am a co-chairperson of a province-wide conference for school-aged child care providers, which will be happening next September up at the Ontario Camp Leadership Centre, Bark Lake, funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I have also done extensive speaking around the province on issues affecting child care for school-aged children. I would like to focus my comments primarily on those issues.

While services for children of school age work within the same restraints as do services for

younger children, such as insufficient subsidies, inadequate program support, low salaries and all those kinds of things—I will spare you the litany of things, which I am sure you are well familiar with and go on to some of the unique opportunities that we are presented with as we look at the evolving school-child care collaboration in this province.

As I am sure you are aware, the Day Nurseries Act provides for the licensing of services for children from infancy right through to 12 years of age. Currently in Metro close to 40 per cent of all children in licensed child care are in that six- to 12-year-old age group.

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From all my reading and discussions with people across the province, it is clear that the partnership that is currently happening between education and child care is unique in many respects in North America. I think we are leaders in designing and constructing new child care centres in the new schools. The pace and development of child care services in existing school spaces is something we can be proud of. I think our overall program quality is something we can be proud of.

The research that is beginning to come from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services I think will have important implications for all of us and for others in other jurisdictions. I think the support for parental involvement in service delivery is an important feature we can be proud of and need to support. Finally, the flurry of policy initiatives and policy discussions that have been happening over the past two years is certainly heartening.

As our experience broadens, I think we are beginning to discover ways of doing the job better, and I hope more efficiently, and that is what I would like to talk about today.

I think the new schools initiative has clearly focused the attention of boards of education and of the child care community on the evolving school-child care partnership. The throne speech announcement about full-day kindergarten programs, where it is believed, has further helped that process.

The attention is of course needed. The school system was established to meet the needs of an agrarian community. Certainly my great-grandfather found the school system very responsive to his needs. He needed his sons at home after school and on summer holidays to help with the harvest and so on, and the very construction of the school day met his needs well. That is not true of parents today. Eighty per cent of parents

with children in the school system are in the paid workforce—that is true in both urban and rural boards—and the school calendar could not be more out of sync with the realities of the workplace.

Fortunately, we probably do not need full day care services for all those children. Some parents only need care for part of the day, perhaps just in the morning or perhaps just after school. Some just need it for part of the year, perhaps just during the summer holidays. Certainly the younger school-aged children tend to need the more comprehensive service. The 10- to 12-year-olds in many communities need opportunities for socialization, to develop leisure interests and so on, but they may not need regular five days a week child care services, and eight- to 10-year-olds are often somewhere in the middle as they begin to get used to some level of involvement in other community services or perhaps some time alone. What all communities do need is a consistent range of child care services that parents and children can access in a flexible manner according to their specific needs.

Ada Schermann from the Institute for Child Study has characterized the relationship between schools and child care providers as a joint custody arrangement. I think that is a good analogy for us to think about. The relationship between the different parties of that arrangement varies tremendously right across the province, just as joint custody arrangements change in different families.

Some school boards and some schoolteachers and child care providers are putting an enormous amount of effort into building significant working relationships, such that all the adults who are involved with a child over the course of a day have contact with each other as it is needed.

For the most part, however, my sense is that programs reflect the framework that is provided by the Ministry of Education through the Education Act and the Ministry of Community and Social Services through the Day Nurseries Act; that is to say, they operate parallel programs for the same children with fairly minimum communication between the two. That is particularly true in programs that are not based in schools, where often the communication is even less than minimal.

In the school-based programs, at least people see each other and that encourages a certain amount, but in the culture which develops in every neighbourhood school, the child care centre easily becomes, in the view of the school staff, a peripheral service. This perhaps makes

sense in that the child care service probably occupies about five per cent of the school space and serves about 10 per cent of the children. Unfortunately, for child care programs 100 per cent of their base comes from the school and 100 per cent of their children come from the school.

Child care staff in workshops I give repeatedly talk about feeling like interlopers in the school system in numerous, very small ways. They point at the clock. Two months after daylight saving time is ended, they tell me that although all the clocks in the rest of the school have been changed, their clock has not been. Or they feel they get a different level of service from the caretakers. They feel they do not always get consulted on decisions affecting school space and affecting their space. It is something that undermines morale and undermines their appreciation and value of their work in many ways.

Also, children in day care and their parents easily become stigmatized. I think any group of children very readily becomes identified as a group, and if it becomes the day care group we can wonder sometimes about the attitudes of teachers to those children and to whatever is going on in their lives. I think we know enough about the importance of teacher attitudes in school performance to be worried about that. I think it has particularly important implications for kindergarten children and special needs kids.

What we need are true collaborative relationships between child care providers and the school system. Unlike the kind of parallel partnerships that are so characteristic, we need working collaborations among all the adults who work with a given child over the course of the day and a genuine commitment to that relationship. I think that starts with recognition, understanding and support for each other's role.

But it goes beyond that. I think decisions in schools need to be based on a balanced consideration of the needs. I know some school boards find it anomalous that a group of grade 5 children may be in a school portable for the full day whereas an after-school group has this quite wonderful new space being built for them that they use just before and after school. It may mean that it is best to put the school-age group in a portable, if all the space that is available is a portable, since they are there for fewer hours.

I know another school where the preschooler group trundles up the stairs to a second storey room every day, and the local superintendent is not prepared to move a grade 1 or 2 classroom from the main floor up. Everything I know about grade 1, the six- and seven-year-olds I know, is

that they spend far too many hours in front of TV sets and would do well to have to walk up and down those stairs every day, rather than making the preschoolers do it.

I think each partner in this collaboration should be contributing to the work of that school through that total day in a way that makes the most sense. That may mean the school-aged child care program runs the school lunch program and they provide that service for the entire community. It may also mean that the school secretary provides typing for the child care program.

The partnership needs to extend into curriculum. The curriculum needs to be co-ordinated so that children's experiences are appropriate and not repetitive and to ensure that opportunities are taken advantage of.

We know that children in kindergarten, for example, do better if they have more hours with the same equipment. Their program is based on exploration and discovery, and having more time with that same equipment allows them to explore more. We know there is an enormous shortage of computers in our schools, but we have many children who have no access to those computers although they are in the building until six o'clock.

We know that our schools do not have enough time in the school gymnasiums and often school-aged child care programs do not get very much time in the gymnasium after school. That is a way in which we can extend the curriculum of the school.

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Early childhood educators need to be involved in the process whereby curriculum guidelines are developed and changed, both at a board and ministry level.

Finally, we have to look at how we train these partners. While I think early childhood education programs at colleges do many things very well, we do not do a particularly good job at addressing the needs of providers of care for school age children. I think currently there are only two programs in the province that provide, for example, compulsory placement with school age children. There is not a lot of focus on, for example, kindergarten programs and a lot of placements in kindergarten programs in many of the community colleges.

At the same time, teacher training does not address the needs of children who are going to be there for the full day, nor do principal's courses to any great extent, or the supervising officers' courses.

I would like to talk a bit about future growth in development, although I do it with some trepidation in that the child care community has been growing so quickly that it is hard to keep up sometimes. The inequity of access to services is becoming increasingly apparent in the community. New schools have access to some services, or some parents whose children are in new schools have access to some services, and schools with vacant classrooms have access to some services.

Schools in high need areas: for example, in North York there is no vacant classroom space and there is therefore no child care program serving those kids, and we know that those kids are often most at risk from being latchkey kids and most at risk of the effects of that experience. Their lunch programs serve 200 children; 200 children come and eat lunch in the school gymnasium. Those parents presumably all work. The child care program in that school serves 15 children. So the child care service serves a very small percentage of the kids in the school.

Where there are services, often they are too rigid for families to actually use. The programs do not allow flexible enrolment, do not allow children, and certainly do not encourage if they allow it, to attend a few days a week or just before school or just after school.

What we need is a fundamental rethinking of how we look at child care in schools. For example, at George Brown College, at our learning centre, we do not send our kindergarten children to the school system. We keep them right in our lab school. The kids come at 7:30 and they stay until six. There are three staff, one who comes in early, one who comes in at nine and another who comes in at 10. They organize the program for the children across the whole day and the children stay in the same room.

I think we need some pilot projects to show that child care programs in schools can operate in that kind of co-ordinated way. I do not see any reason why a kindergarten classroom cannot be a kindergarten classroom in the morning and a child care program in the afternoon. or for that matter, why a grade 1 classroom cannot do the same kind of program model.

We need to start thinking of child care for older children in different ways. The school needs to become almost a community centre for the older children. We need to encourage flexible enrolment policies.

Schools where early childhood services are available: because in Ontario child care has evolved in such a haphazard fashion, sometimes there are parent-child dropin programs and there

is a whole range of child care services not necessarily under the auspices of the one board of directors or the one operator. I think we need to encourage ownership of all the child care services in a given school to come under one umbrella.

When we think of a service for which we are spending \$500,000 on building a facility, I think it is important that it feel some responsibility to the needs of that total school community. By bringing other child care services, such as the lunch program and the parent-child dropin centre and so on, underneath that umbrella, we can start encouraging boards of directors to feel that larger responsibility to the larger community.

I would like to conclude by talking a bit about the full-day kindergarten programs. The throne speech announcement raises a measure of fear in the child care community, perhaps because it puts some pressure on space. Certainly some programs are concerned about losing space as the kindergartens expand, and also there are concerns about enrolment, that parents will take children out of programs and just use informal care arrangements.

We are also concerned about the training of kindergarten teachers. They certainly do not have as much time spent on early childhood education as our graduates, for example, do. We are not completely convinced they are prepared to take into consideration the needs of five-year-olds over that longer day.

My experience in one full-day kindergarten program was that it can be good for children in full-time day care. It certainly made co-ordination between care and day care a whole lot easier. If a teacher is only concerned about 22 children, rather than 22 children in the morning and 22 children in the afternoon, the possibility that the connections will be made becomes much greater.

My experience was also that full-day kindergarten, certainly in our program, did not affect child care fees a great deal. In order to have a trained person, we had to give a person full-time work. What it meant was that the child care provider was able to get some planning time and preparation time and was also available to work in the classroom program a certain amount as an assistant, which I think was useful for everyone, especially as we worry about ratios in the kindergarten programs across the province.

Full-day kindergarten was also good for parents who were using the informal care system or who do not need full-time day care. It was easier sometimes to get informal care after school

rather than having to get it for that longer period of time. However, it does raise problems with the lunchtime program for those children. Some children at that age still need naps and things such as that, so the child care component needs to be carefully thought of.

Communities need a range of options to allow them to choose the best fit. I cannot help but wonder whether we should be thinking that some schools may have, if there is space, fully integrated, full-day kindergarten-day care programs using the same space and sharing the same staff. It may be possible that we could have a full-day kindergarten program in one room that does not collaborate with the day care program, and a half-day kindergarten program which stays in that same room, where the child care staff come in at 12 o'clock and carry on with those children for the whole day and where a really clear collaborative relationship is worked out.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your comments. I have one questioner.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There were lots of very interesting ideas and I have jotted down a few of them. I guess the major question I have for you, which comes out of what you have said, is, how do we get there from here, essentially, with the competing jurisdictions? Some of the things you started to say about the fears that are there in the child care community about full-day kindergarten can be reversed in terms of the fears in the kindergarten sector about the incursion of child care into their programs. The sort of thing you are talking about is facility and communication. The last group before us was talking about a major task force, etc. I wonder if you could talk a little about how you see we can get there from here.

Mr Young: In the long term the only way it can really happen is if child care comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. I think we all have to have the same employer. Unless that happens—I was in Quebec in October at a child care conference there. Many boards of education in Quebec actually hold a licence for the school-age programs. My sense was that they were not a whole lot farther ahead because of that and they were starting to have to do more of the discussion we are doing.

I think in the long term we may be better off for having taken a slower route towards complete integration, but I think the government needs to say that is where we are going. That is the first thing. Then we need to encourage discussion towards that. I think we need some pilot projects to show how collaboration really could work and

to show the measurable benefits for children and parents of that collaboration, because it is quite clear to me that we will find those measurable benefits.

1530

I think we need to look at how the whole network of the education system in the child care community can be interwoven in more ways and at more levels. That has to happen when we develop curriculum guidelines, and it needs to happen at the board level and it has to happen at the neighbourhood school level.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about one of the major concerns that is always expressed in the child care sector—and you alluded to it indirectly, if the move is made towards Ministry of Education control—that is, the role of parent boards, which is seen now as a major strength of the child care system? How do you see that evolving?

Mr Young: I think many parent boards would not be unhappy to give up some of the financial responsibilities of the child care centre—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am sure that is true.

Mr Young: —and would be very resistant to giving up any of the program responsibilities. I do not think there is any reason why parent boards cannot be involved in hiring of teachers, discussions about the program and so on. In fact, in the Toronto Board of Education parents are involved in all those processes. I do not think we need to lose some of those good things about parent boards; I think we could strengthen them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So in fact sort of extending that to a school council kind of concept would be one way of doing it.

Mr Young: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know you did not come on behalf of George Brown, but because I have been totally obsessed lately with what people are actually doing out there and trying to get a handle on it and not finding anybody who seems to know, let me ask you a little bit about what you know. Obviously, you know about what is provided in the George Brown program, and maybe you should start off by talking about that, but I wonder if you do know about how it compares or contrasts with the Centennial program and other college programs in terms of likenesses and the lack of similarities.

Mr Young: I am concerned about saying too much in that I am still fairly new to the college system and I am still just beginning to get involved at those levels. Our program is unique

in the province also in that we have a block system. Students spend two months in school doing the academic portion of the program and then two months in the field working in a child care centre, working the hours of a child care staff person, which gives them a real sense of the life of that child and a day in the life of that centre, which they all report back to us they quite like and quite appreciate.

In the academic portion, I think one distinction between us—and it is a similarity between us and Seneca, but a distinction with other colleges—is that we spend a fair bit of time on the needs of school-aged children and school-age child care, and I think we have a good emphasis on infant care as well. We have been known as having a specialization in that area, partly because in downtown Toronto we have more infant child care than, unfortunately, we have in Scarborough at this point, and we are able to place our students and so on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: God knows. How much, for instance, does the practicum work out to? We were given an average from Centennial of between 500 and up to about 1,000 hours of practicum over the two-year period. Do you have any idea what it works out to on that basis?

Mr Young: I know we are at the highest end. Our students spend more time in the field than those of any of the other colleges.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about developmental theory? How long? Do you have any idea?

Mr Young: I do not know the exact number of hours, but I would think, in terms of child development theory, there is some consistency through the colleges on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One wonders how there is consistency, from what I am gathering here, if nobody has done any major comparisons on it. I was just stunned by that fact.

Mr Young: It is an area that a whole lot of work needs to be done in, and if we are going to have articulation between us and the universities, we have to get our own house in order.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is one tiny little thing. You mentioned that this day care centre or child care centre in the school was on the second floor. I was under the impression that guidelines for the Ministry of Community and Social Services would not have allowed that at a Ministry of Community and Social Services facility. You had to have direct access out on to your play area.

Mr Young: A preschool program can be on the second floor.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I see.

Mr Neumann: Thank you for your presentation. I found a lot of what you said was very down to earth and right on some of the issues that we need to address.

In terms of the linkages that you are aware of among the different contributors to the assessment of the children who are in the programs, do you have any comment about the liaison between day care and the school system in terms of identifying children who could potentially be at risk or learning-disabled?

Mr Young: Once again, I think it is a very haphazard arrangement. It happens in some schools and it does not happen in other schools, and it happens at different levels. It really depends on the openness of the individuals and the policies of the local boards of education and the child care providers.

Mr Neumann: Is it more likely to happen in a day care centre which is in a school, as opposed to a day care centre independent of the school?

Mr Young: I would think so. I know in a class I was teaching on Tuesday night, where the program has moved out of the school actually because of lack of space, the staff person was saying she was surprised at how quickly the relationship deteriorated and how much less information she got because the program was now down the street, rather than right in the school and across the hall.

Mr Neumann: Do you have any familiarity with the role of other agencies in the community that could potentially work with day care centres and the school system to help identify children who might have special needs, such as the children's aid society, the public health nurses and so on?

Mr Young: Public health nurses are certainly involved in every day care centre. They are part of a licensing process around immunization, and they certainly do come in. There are other agencies, once again, depending on the community. One of the things I hear about is that staff feel a lot of frustration in dealing with special needs kids in their programs. Often these kids may come from another school and get bused to the child care program. They may be in several different programs over the course of the day and the child care staff may or may not have information about those other programs. It seems to me that serving these special needs kids, if the kid is in the day care program in the school as well, the board of education needs to assume

some responsibility for co-ordinating the total program for that child.

Mr Neumann: Have you had any direct experience with or observation of the IPRC process that exists in the schools?

Mr Young: Just secondhand.

Mr Neumann: I imagine the difficulty of creating a seamless day for children who are in special classes becomes greater because many of the school boards have the classes in some schools but not in others, and the kids who are identified as having a special need then get designated to a behaviour class or a learning-disabled class or whatever, and they are then bused out of their neighbourhood to another school. If you add to that a day care component at the beginning or the end of the day, you would have the children who are most at risk and who probably need more stability being the ones who are most disrupted. Can you confirm that that is the case, and what do you think we can do about it?

Mr Young: I think it may often be the case. Some boards, I know, involve the day care staff in the IPRC procedure, with permission from the parent, and others do not. Clearly, it is an area that needs more direction and thought.

Mr Neumann: Within the curriculum at George Brown specifically and the training of the professionals who work in the day care field, are these two areas of violence in the family and identification of at-risk children a required part of the program?

Mr Young: Yes. There is a substantial amount of content on child abuse and recognizing indicators and so on from the reporting perspective, and also there is a course on family dynamics where they get some understanding of the changing family and some of the issues around child abuse. We are also fortunate at George Brown in that we have the assaulted women and children's program at our campus, so we also have other resources that we are able to call in.

We have a course on special needs for preschool children that all students take. It does not talk a lot about the relationship with the school children, but once children are older. We do not have enough hours in the two-year program to provide students a field placement opportunity with special needs children, although a substantial portion of our students will do that on a voluntary basis.

1540

Mr Neumann: Just as a side note, you made a comment about the number of students who stay for the lunch hour and that being an indicator of the number of parents who are working. I think there was a change in the regulations within the last couple of years where it used to be optional for the boards to provide noonhour supervision, and many boards required the kids, if they lived within a certain distance, to walk home for lunch.

Mr Young: Right.

Mr Neumann: Whereas now all schools, I believe, are required to provide noonhour supervision. So there are much larger numbers in the schools over the noonhour than there used to be a couple of years ago.

Mr Young: Which in many ways is a big improvement. But the regulations are different in terms of child care. In a school-age child care program, if you are going to run a lunch program, you would have to work within the one-to-15 ratio, whereas you may have a school principal and 200 children in a gym in the school lunch program. So there is an enormous discrepancy between the two in terms of the quality of what is going on there. There are no guidelines for the boards. Some boards have independently provided some funding to community groups or the child care program to hire people to supervise at lunchtime but some boards do not, and it is still part of the teacher's responsibilities.

Mr Neumann: Of all the recommendations you could think of in this area of the early years of the child in school and day care, what do you think is the most pressing priority?

Mr Young: I think we have to move towards a seamless day. I am not sure it is the most pressing. I think any of these are really important. I think we need some pilot projects around the seamless day, if there was one really concrete thing that could happen.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate your comments. Before we recess to room 151, because we have the translation facilities for those members of the committee who are not fluent in French, I just have a couple of items to bring to your attention on a committee basis. Mr Johnston wanted to participate. He was just outside. Perhaps somebody could just let him know we are just ready to recess.

While we are waiting, I very much appreciated the hospitality of Ryerson. I have asked the clerk to send, under my signature, a letter acknowledging the fact that we very much appreciated their hospitality yesterday and made sure that the

information was passed on to other committee members.

We just have a bit of business here before we recess, because I suspect that some of you will need to make travel arrangements, as I do, or get out of here. I would just like Bob to bring us up to date on where he sits on this situation. We have probably talked a little bit about where we go from here, as the readying person and his friendly computer.

Mr Gardner: Actually, just one thing from yesterday's visit to Ryerson: The high scope curriculum that the staff was talking to us about, the members will remember that from the background report I did on American research. It was the Perry preschool program in Michigan. The stuff that I was citing in the report was basically on the advantages of such programs, particularly for disadvantaged kids in terms of later educational achievement and social problems and so on. But that is where they got the curriculum. We were a bit confused because we thought they were saying "high school program" for a while. Anyway, just to specify that.

What I would plan to do is provide our usual summary of the recommendations and observations that witnesses have provided to the committee for the Monday of the next set of hearings, which would be 5 February. In that we have a little more time than usual with that week break between now and then, what I might try and do is put together a bit of prose to it rather than just the regular bullet points, some linking passages, not to anticipate what members will want to put in the report, but simply to draw together a few themes. I do not know if that will work out, so you may get our traditional bullet-point type of summary. If members smile on that idea, I might play around with it a little bit.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I smiled.

The Chair: Others too. I just wanted to make sure that we were all aware of this.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you cannot do that, could you use the traditional bullets and one of your question kind of things that you have often done, where you do the layout of the possible directions it can go and that kind of thing?

Mr Gardner: Yes. The question there would be, do you want that kind of framework of questions or issues for Monday or for the Thursday when there will be the first discussion of report writing?

Mr R. J. Johnston: I think it is a little bit pre-emptive to do too much of it for Thursday,

but if you are finding there are things that you think are ready, that can be brought forward, then do what you can.

Dr Gardner: Okay, so I will take that direction. I will look at Hansard and look at my notes, and if there are some things that are pretty clear from now, I will provide them. If not, we will have them all for our wrapup on Thursday.

The Chair: Before I recognize Dave, it seems that in our sitting through this there have been a few sort of fairly clear themes that are starting to evolve. Perhaps if we do get them on the Monday, we can spend some time looking them over so that we save time a little later in the writing process; again, not to pre-empt, of course, what the committee members are trying to work out in their own minds as to where this report is going but to help us with a little bit of direction.

Mr Neumann: I may be out of line in suggesting this, but I will throw it out anyway. I am interested in hearing from someone representing the public health nurses or the public health units across Ontario. Another suggestion I might have is the children's aid societies and also the Canadian Neurological Coalition, of which the learning disabled are a part, I believe. I do not know what the attitude of the committee is in terms of seeking new input, whether by presentation or briefs. I thought I would throw it out anyway.

The Chair: I appreciate that. One of the difficulties is this time frame that we have had to work under. I think those suggestions are excellent ones, because I think that gives us more insight. In fact, a number of deputants have referred to the people whom you are suggesting appear. We have looked at our schedule for the week after next to try and work in more people who have indicated that the time lines are all right and the scheduling was okay for them to appear. One of the difficulties was that some folks just did not have the opportunity to appear. If you will notice, there were a couple of gaps in our schedule this week. That was to allow for people to come at a little more of a last minute than receiving their notice and everything else.

Your second point on written notice or submitting written briefs is certainly in order and I think we can take that into account, if Tannis were to deal with a number of those folks. I think it was made clear, as I think is the tradition of any committee, those kinds of things are welcome, particularly, again, with supplementary information, which has been requested by this committee of some deputants.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just in response, I would distinguish between the three groups that you have suggested and the methodology for them. I would think it would be very helpful to get somebody here from public health to talk with us, whether he has a brief or not, just to respond to a whole series of questions about his present responsibilities and limitations, etc. So if they can be squeezed in, that would be very useful in terms of the public audience, I would think.

I have a somewhat jaundiced view about the usefulness of having a children's aid society or association or whatever coming forward, frankly, but I would be happy to have a response from them in writing. It strikes me that the other, the neurological side of things, could well be done that way as well, because I think a lot of generalized points that we need to make have already been made, either by yourself or by the presenters we have had from learning disabilities at this stage. I am not sure how much more we would actually need in terms of where we can go with the recommendations, but I would be interested to get some written information from them.

You will have to specify some kind of deadline that is useful to ourselves in terms of our process for what we do after, a week from Thursday. That is what I would propose in terms of the methodologies.

Mr Neumann: Being a substitute member, I hesitated to throw—

The Chair: No, no.

Mr Neumann: —because I know the committee has set its course.

The Chair: You are a regular member, as far as that goes, and your input is as valued as any other member's. There is no second-class citizen on this committee. At least, I try to be as evenhanded as I can.

Mr Neumann: I would have participated more if I had known that.

The Chair: Anything further on that then? Tannis has been making the notes and we will attempt to try and get that contact communication by 5 February so that we can report back on how successful we have been in making sure that those directions are taken.

We stand recessed for about five minutes to get us over to room 151 and set up.

The committee recessed at 1550.

1600

The committee resumed in room 151.

The Chair: I am going to call this committee meeting to order again.

Mrs O'Neill: We will use this room together. There was a team here.

The Chair: That is important, thank you.

Bienvenue au comité spécial de l'éducation : l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario ; Jocelyne Ladouceur ?

ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES DE L'ONTARIO

Mme Ladouceur : Merci. Ma présentation va se faire en français ; par contre, s'il y a des questions en anglais après, je serai heureuse de répondre dans l'une ou l'autre des langues.

Je vais commencer, pour les interprètes, par une petite introduction qui n'est pas dans le document ; ensuite je vais entamer le document. La bienséance veut que dans des circonstances comme celles-ci, les intervenants remercient les membres du comité de l'occasion qui leur est offerte de comparaître et de faire part de leurs perspectives, ce que je fais aujourd'hui en mon nom et au nom de l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario.

Mais je serais moins qu'honnête si je ne vous avouais pas que les sentiments de l'Association sont quelque peu mitigés par les résultats que nous avons obtenus suite à nos présentations précédentes devant ce même comité. Plus particulièrement, je me réfère aux recommandations que vous avez rendues publiques le 17 janvier dernier et qui portaient sur le financement de l'éducation.

Alors qu'il y avait consensus au sein de toute la communauté franco-ontariennne sur l'importance primordiale d'un financement équitable pour les écoles de langue française publiques et catholiques, afin d'assurer l'équivalence de services et de qualité qui nous est garantie par la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés et confirmée par la Cour suprême de l'Ontario, vous avez ignoré cette question.

Nous nous sommes donc questionnés sur la pertinence de venir faire une présentation aujourd'hui mais, comme nous continuons toujours de croire au processus démocratique, malgré tout, nous voici encore une fois devant vous. J'espère que, en gardant à l'esprit la raison principale pour laquelle nous sommes ici, les enfants dans nos écoles, vous serez sensibles à nos perspectives et aux besoins des petits Franco-Ontariens qui seront servis par les services à la petite enfance dans nos écoles.

Ceci étant dit, l'AFCSO se réjouit des initiatives annoncées dans le discours du trône d'avril 1989 destinées à améliorer la qualité de l'éducation en Ontario, et particulièrement celle

voulant que l'éducation des enfants de quatre et cinq ans devienne obligatoire pour tous les Ontariens.

If I am going too fast, let me know, please, because I tend to do that.

Nous reconnaissons également et apprécions toutes les démarches qui ont été entreprises par le gouvernement de l'Ontario depuis quelques années dans le but d'augmenter l'accès aux services de garde pour tous les enfants de la province. Tout en favorisant l'épanouissement individuel dès un bas âge, ces projets jouent un rôle des plus importants pour assurer à la société ontarienne une haute qualité de vie. Nous savons également que les services éducationnels à la petite enfance constituent une étape importante dans la refonte du système d'éducation et nous appuyons cette décision du gouvernement.

Tout en appuyant ces initiatives, qu'il nous soit permis de soulever certaines préoccupations d'ordre pédagogique que manifestent les membres de l'AFCSO. Nous croyons qu'il est absolument nécessaire que les responsables de l'élaboration des nouvelles politiques et des nouveaux programmes destinés aux garderies, aux maternelles et aux jardins d'enfants, s'assurent de respecter les stades de croissance psychologique et sociale des enfants de la naissance jusqu'à cinq ans. Il ne faudrait pas que les programmes négligent le développement social et affectif, qui est tout aussi important en bas âge que le développement cognitif et intellectuel.

Tout en respectant les capacités cognitives des enfants d'âge préscolaire, nous croyons sincèrement que les services éducationnels qui leur sont destinés ne doivent pas devenir des carcans où l'acquisition des connaissances est la priorité au détriment de l'épanouissement social et affectif.

L'accès aux garderies et l'expansion du système d'éducation pour inclure les années préparatoires sont des initiatives qui revêtent une importance particulière pour la communauté francophone. L'AFCSO réitère ce qu'elle a dit à maintes reprises : pour atteindre les objectifs visés, soit la réalisation des pleines possibilités individuelles et la contribution au développement économique et social de la province, le gouvernement doit aborder la planification de ces projets de façon différente pour les deux groupes linguistiques de l'Ontario.

1610

Les Franco-Ontariens ont reconnu depuis longtemps que les garderies et les programmes préscolaires offerts dans les écoles revêtaient une importance capitale pour assurer une vie de qualité et le plein épanouissement des franco-

phones, pour les intégrer dans la collectivité franco-ontarienne et pour assurer la survie de la communauté. Les expériences préscolaires que vit le petit Franco-Ontarien sont déterminantes dans son avenir en tant qu'individu et membre actif de sa communauté.

Puisque la garderie, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants constituent la plaque tournante dans la transition entre la famille et la communauté, leur cohérence avec le milieu familial est essentielle. À ce stade de développement, l'image que l'enfant se fait de lui-même et du monde est à se façonner, ce qui le rend très vulnérable et facilement malléable. L'éducation reçue dans les garderies et durant les années préparatoires doit permettre à l'enfant franco-ontarien de se valoriser dans son identité francophone ; sinon, il y perd son identité linguistique et culturelle et s'assimile très rapidement.

Malheureusement, les statistiques démontrent que le taux d'assimilation des francophones en bas âge est à la hausse. De plus en plus d'enfants ont déjà perdu leur langue maternelle avant même d'entrer à l'école parce qu'ils n'ont pas eu accès à des services de garde en français. De plus, un très grand nombre d'enfants proviennent de foyers mixtes et à cause de cette situation, ne peuvent pas s'exprimer adéquatement en français.

Il s'agit de faire le compte des coûts affectés à la réalisation des nombreuses initiatives que doivent mettre sur pied les conseils scolaires et les sections de langue française à travers la province dans le but de refranciser et de revaloriser les enfants durant les années préparatoires, pour constater l'ampleur du problème qui caractérise les services préscolaires en langue française. Dans certaines localités, 75 pour cent des enfants admis à la maternelle et au jardin d'enfant ne parlent ni ne comprennent le français. Et puis, je dois peut-être ajouter qu'il s'agit des enfants qui ont droit, les ayants droit, donc il n'est pas question de les exclure.

Malgré les nombreuses initiatives mises de l'avant par les responsables de l'éducation francophone dans le but d'éliminer le retard qu'accusent ces enfants, la situation ne pourra être corrigée que si le gouvernement s'engage face à l'importance particulière que prennent pour l'enfant et pour la communauté francophone, les services de garde d'enfants et les années préparatoires.

Le présent mémoire fait état des particularités qui caractérisent la situation actuelle des besoins éducationnels des enfants francophones de la naissance à cinq ans et il propose quelques

éléments de solution, lesquels trouvent leur signification dans le contexte d'une politique globale de l'éducation en langue française.

L'AFCSO recommande : que le gouvernement de l'Ontario s'engage à adopter une politique globale pour les services éducationnels en langue française destinés à la petite enfance et qu'il prenne les initiatives qui s'imposent pour assurer aux enfants francophones l'égalité d'accès à des services éducationnels de qualité équivalente à ceux offerts aux enfants anglophones, tant dans les garderies que durant les années préparatoires.

L'AFCSO croit que les garderies sont non seulement un service de garde d'enfants mais également une partie intégrante du processus éducationnel de l'individu. Pour les francophones, ceci est une réalité qui prend une importance de premier ordre.

Lorsque des parents francophones choisissent une garderie pour leurs enfants, la langue de communication est un critère de première importance. La majorité d'entre eux recherche un milieu dans lequel leur enfant pourra continuer à grandir et à s'épanouir dans sa langue et dans sa culture. Pour les couples mixtes qui choisissent que leur enfant adhère à la langue et à la culture française, la garderie est un endroit privilégié où celui-ci peut vivre et s'épanouir en français.

Malheureusement, le choix des parents francophones est très limité et, dans la plupart des endroits de la province, il est inexistant, puisque l'on compte très peu de garderies francophones en Ontario. La majorité de celles où l'on parle le français s'affichent comme étant bilingues, et celles-ci sont de plus en plus nombreuses. S'il est reconnu et accepté de tous que les écoles mixtes sont des foyers d'assimilation, les garderies bilingues le sont davantage.

Lorsqu'on tente d'imaginer et de décrire le vécu de l'enfant francophone dans une garderie bilingue, on se rend vite compte de l'incohérence à laquelle l'enfant de cet âge doit faire face et du dilemme dans lequel il se retrouve.

Alors qu'il est dans le processus d'acquérir ses connaissances verbales, on le plonge quotidiennement dans un milieu où il entend deux langues sans pouvoir rattacher l'une ou l'autre à un contexte spécifique. Aussi, à cause du contexte social dans lequel nous vivons, la langue qui prime dans un endroit qui se dit bilingue est l'anglais. La garderie bilingue ne fait pas exception à cette règle, ce qui n'aide aucunement l'enfant d'un foyer mixte qui fréquente cette garderie à parfaire ses capacités de communication en français. Pour l'enfant qui vient d'un foyer francophone, cette incohérence entre la

famille et la garderie fait naître chez lui des sentiments de confusion, lesquels sont amplifiés par la réalité sociale et médiatique qui l'entoure, réalité qui, comme nous le savons, est principalement anglophone.

Or, il s'avère absolument essentiel que l'enfant francophone de la naissance à quatre ans puisse évoluer dans une garderie où il peut entendre sa langue maternelle, où il peut communiquer et se faire comprendre par les autres enfants et par les responsables de la garderie dans cette langue. Sinon, l'enfant développe une image négative de sa langue, de sa culture, de lui-même et de sa famille et il s'assimile très rapidement.

L'AFCSO recommande : que le gouvernement, par le biais des ministères de l'Éducation et des Services sociaux et communautaires, adopte un plan d'expansion des services de garde en langue française qui assurera la création et le maintien de garderies de langue française dans toutes les parties de la province.

Les critères existants pour déterminer les types de garderies pénalisent les parents francophones. Ce sont les responsables du dossier des services de garde dans les bureaux régionaux du ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires qui décident du genre et de l'emplacement des garderies qui seront établies sur leur territoire. Ces décisions sont basées sur des critères établis par le ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (M. Beer), lesquels tiennent compte principalement des demandes de la communauté.

La faible concentration et la dispersion géographique de la population francophone, tant dans les régions urbaines que rurales, rendent très difficile le regroupement des parents pour réclamer une garderie de langue française. Parce qu'elle représente moins de personnes, la voix des parents francophones est fortement diluée et leurs besoins demeurent secondaires et incompris. À cause des critères, ils doivent souvent se regrouper avec des parents anglophones et se satisfaire d'une garderie bilingue. L'AFCSO souhaite ardemment que la Loi 8 viendra rectifier cette anomalie et que des critères différents seront adoptés pour répondre aux besoins des services de garde en français.

L'AFCSO recommande donc : que le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires adopte des critères distincts pour la création de garderies de langue française qui tiennent compte de la réalité démographique et des besoins de la communauté francophone; et que le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires mette sur pied une campagne médiatique dans le but

d'identifier les parents francophones intéressés par des services de garde en langue française et de favoriser leur regroupement.

Maintenant, passons aux garderies dans les écoles. Selon les règlements adoptés en 1988 par le ministère de l'Éducation, toute nouvelle construction scolaire doit abriter une garderie. L'AFCSO est pleinement d'accord avec ce règlement ; cependant, dans plusieurs conseils où les projets d'immobilisation furent approuvés, les espaces désignés aux programmes scolaires réguliers furent réduits pour accommoder la garderie. Les conseils en pleine expansion furent durement touchés par cette modification ; certains se voient même dans l'obligation d'ajouter des classes portatives à leur nouvelle construction afin d'accommoder leurs élèves.

Nous espérons que la situation sera corrigée lors de l'allocation des prochains fonds d'immobilisation. Selon les nouvelles politiques, les conseils ont également la liberté d'identifier et de louer des espaces à des fins de services de garde. Bien que les conseils scolaires soient responsables des locaux destinés aux garderies établies dans leurs écoles, les programmes qui y sont dispensés demeurent la responsabilité de la collectivité.

Les sections de langue française dans les conseils qui oeuvrent sous le régime – Too fast? No?

The Chair: They are just indicating to me that they have a question.

Mrs Ladouceur: I just cannot get over it; nobody has interrupted me yet.

M. R. F. Johnston : A mon avis les interprètes ne peuvent pas suivre et des gens n'osent pas se pratiquer. Ça peut être un problème.

Mrs Ladouceur: That is what I thought, that that is what it was.

M. R. F. Johnston : Ils ne peuvent pas parler.

The Chair: We try to have the presentation completed first and then questions. That is why you are not being interrupted.

Mrs Ladouceur: I thought she was raising her hand because the interpreters were having problems.

The Chair: No.

Mme Ladouceur : Les sections de langue française dans les conseils qui oeuvrent sous le régime de la Loi 75 sont responsables des programmes qui sont dispensés dans les écoles de langue française. Cependant, parce que la section de langue française n'a pas le pouvoir de décider de l'utilisation des espaces dans les

édifices du conseil, elles ne peuvent pas décider d'offrir des locaux à la communauté pour ouvrir des garderies, ni de décider de l'emplacement des garderies de langue française dans les écoles du conseil.

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Pourtant, l'école de langue française est l'institution franco-ontarienne la plus solidement établie. Elle rayonne dans la communauté et contribue largement à la diffusion du patrimoine linguistique et culturel de la collectivité franco-ontarienne, tout en servant de point de ralliement à ses membres. Sa vocation s'étend donc à une foule d'aspects de la vie collective autre que l'aspect scolaire.

L'école franco-ontarienne se doit d'être un véritable centre communautaire vers lequel les francophones se tournent pour satisfaire leurs besoins culturels. En outre, l'école communautaire comporte des avantages d'ordre économique très importants.

Il s'avère donc tout à fait approprié et conforme à la vocation de l'école de langue française que des garderies françaises y soient établies. Mais pour que ceci se réalise, il faut que, dans un premier temps, des amendements soient apportés à la Loi 75 pour que l'identification et l'usage de locaux destinés aux garderies de langue française relèvent de la juridiction exclusive de la section de langue française.

Étant donné la pénurie de garderies de langue française et leur importance pour la communauté, il est essentiel que le gouvernement reconnaisse cette réalité et s'engage à fournir aux conseils scolaires de langue française et aux sections de langue française les fonds d'immobilisation requis pour la construction d'annexes aux édifices scolaires existants qui ne disposent pas d'espaces suffisants pour abriter des garderies.

Il est vrai que les coûts d'une telle initiative seraient élevés à prime abord, mais il faut tenir compte du fait que la nécessité actuelle d'offrir des programmes de refrancisation, qui sont très coûteux, serait diminuée et éventuellement presque éliminée. Il en résulterait donc des économies à longue échéance.

L'AFCSO recommande : que le gouvernement amende la partie XI de la Loi sur l'éducation pour donner à la section de langue française le pouvoir exclusif de désigner et de gérer les locaux dans les édifices scolaires destinés aux garderies de langue française ; et que le gouvernement modifie le programme de subventions d'immobilisation afin de tenir compte du lien étroit qui existe entre la vocation communautaire des écoles de

langue française et les besoins des francophones en matière de service de garde, et qu'il accorde des subventions aux conseils scolaires et aux sections de langue française pour la construction d'annexes aux édifices existants pour abriter les garderies de langue française.

A moins qu'ils n'aient vécu dans un milieu francophone jusqu'à leur admission à l'école, les enfants d'âge préscolaire n'acquiescent pas les notions linguistiques et culturelles nécessaires pour être intégrés dans une classe de langue française. Aux programmes des années préparatoires, les responsables de l'éducation en langue française doivent ajouter des programmes de re francisation et de récupération. Cette problématique particulière aux francophones comporte des responsabilités supplémentaires pour les conseils et les sections de langue française.

Face à la situation alarmante, les conseils scolaires de langue française ont fait une priorité d'offrir aux enfants des classes d'accueil, de récupération linguistique, d'intégration culturelle et même des écoles destinées à la petite enfance durant les années préparatoires. Bien que les programmes prennent une nomenclature différente d'un conseil à l'autre, ils ont tous pour objectif d'amener l'enfant à s'exprimer correctement et couramment en français dans le but de l'intégrer dans une classe régulière le plus rapidement possible, et habituellement avant la fin de la troisième année.

Ayant pour but d'assurer à la communauté francophone une qualité d'éducation équivalente à celle offerte aux anglophones, ces projets sont fondamentalement essentiels.

Cependant, malgré leur nombre et leur impact, les efforts déployés sont nettement insuffisants. Le système de financement et de gestion qui prévaut à l'heure actuelle ne reconnaît pas ce besoin éducationnel particulier à l'éducation en langue française et par conséquent, les conseillers francophones n'ont pas accès aux sommes requises pour répondre à ce besoin.

Les coûts reliés au personnel et à l'achat d'équipement et de matériel didactique sont définis comme des dépenses supplémentaires qui proviennent des fonds destinés aux activités scolaires régulières des écoles de langue française. Afin d'assurer que les sections de langue française soient en mesure d'offrir des services de re francisation de qualité, l'AFCSO recommande : que le gouvernement reconnaisse que les programmes de re francisation durant les années préparatoires constituent un moyen fondamental d'assurer l'équivalence de l'éducation en langue française ;

que le ministère de l'Éducation crée un programme de subventions spéciales, ayant pour but de financer les programmes de re francisation offerts durant les années préparatoires de l'éducation en langue française ;

que le ministère de l'Éducation, par le biais de ses bureaux régionaux, offre des services d'appui et de consultation aux conseils scolaires et aux sections de langue française qui offrent des programmes de re francisation durant les années préparatoires ; et

que le ministère de l'Éducation collabore financièrement au projet de re francisation que l'AFCSO veut mettre sur pied dans toutes les écoles de la province.

Maintenant les jardins d'enfants à temps plein : Les initiatives du trône mentionnent que les conseils scolaires qui disposent d'espace auront accès au financement des programmes s'ils décident d'offrir des jardins d'enfants à temps plein. Pour les enfants francophones, surtout là où la communauté est fortement minoritaire, les jardins à temps plein représentent une façon intéressante d'accélérer le processus de re francisation, et de devancer l'intégration des enfants dans une classe ou dans un programme régulier. Par ce fait même, les jardins à temps plein favorisent l'épanouissement éducationnel de l'enfant francophone, tout en réduisant les dépenses reliées aux programmes de re francisation actuels.

Étant donné les nombreux avantages que comportent les jardins à temps plein pour l'éducation en langue française, l'AFCSO recommande : que le gouvernement accorde des fonds d'immobilisation spéciaux aux conseils scolaires qui n'ont pas les espaces voulus pour offrir des jardins de langue française à temps plein afin que ces conseils puissent construire des annexes aux édifices scolaires existants.

Dans les conseils qui oeuvrent sous le régime de la Loi 75, l'allocation des locaux relève du conseil en entier. Les programmes de re francisation et les jardins d'enfants à temps plein requièrent évidemment des espaces.

Même si le conseil dispose d'espace, il arrive que le groupe majoritaire d'un conseil refuse de reconnaître que ces programmes sont essentiels pour assurer une qualité équivalente d'éducation en langue française. Le conseil peut alors tout simplement et de façon arbitraire rejeter la demande d'espace faite par la section.

Alors que l'article 277e de la Loi sur l'éducation confère aux francophones le droit de gérer pour le conseil des écoles de langue française, c'est le groupe majoritaire du conseil

qui continue de détenir le contrôle et le pouvoir réel.

Comment peut-on vraiment gérer dans un régime qui impose que tout projet spécifique à l'éducation en langue française qui demande une façon différente de voir les choses dépende de la bonne volonté du groupe majoritaire? La Loi doit donc être amendée afin de donner aux sections de langue française le pouvoir d'exiger du conseil les locaux nécessaires à la prestation des services particuliers destinés aux programmes de retransformation et de jardins à temps plein.

L'AFCO recommande : que le ministère de l'Éducation amende la partie XI de la Loi sur l'éducation afin d'accorder aux francophones le droit de décider exclusivement des locaux qui sont nécessaires à la prestation de l'éducation durant les années préparatoires.

La première priorité qui guide le plan d'action 1989-94 pour la refonte du système d'éducation se lit comme suit : « Offrir l'égalité d'accès à des programmes d'enseignement de qualité qui assureront des expériences d'apprentissage cohérentes à tous les enfants ontariens de quatre et cinq ans au cours des années préparatoires. »

Pour atteindre cet objectif, il faut que les politiques, les programmes et le matériel didactique soient conçus en fonction des besoins et de la réalité culturelle des Franco-Ontariens, et qu'ils ne soient pas tout simplement des adaptations d'initiatives conçues pour les anglophones. Tout en partageant les buts de l'éducation du ministère de l'Éducation, l'AFCO recommande : que le gouvernement reconnaisse ce qui distingue les Franco-Ontariens de la majorité anglophone en matière scolaire, et qu'il mette en place des structures appropriées dans le cadre du Conseil consultatif sur les programmes d'enseignement, afin d'assurer l'égalité des chances et le respect de la langue et de la culture franco-ontarienne.

Dans ce même plan d'action visant à la réforme du système, le ministère de l'Éducation énonce clairement sa mission : « Inspirer, orienter et appuyer le système d'éducation de la maternelle à la fin de la douzième année, afin d'aider chaque élève à réaliser ses pleines possibilités, et à contribuer au développement économique et social de la province. »

Cette mission ne pourra être respectée que si le ministère de l'Éducation adopte une orientation distincte pour l'éducation en langue française durant les années préparatoires. Ceci suppose que les francophones doivent avoir un plein pouvoir de gestion, tant au sein du Ministère que dans les conseils scolaires, et qu'une refonte des

programmes de subventions destinée aux écoles de langue française soit entreprise. Pour les francophones de l'Ontario, voilà le prix de l'égalité d'accès à des programmes d'enseignement de qualité équivalente, et de leur pleine participation à l'Ontario de demain. Merci.

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The Chair: I have a couple of questioners, but before I call on them, I realize that your preliminary remarks you dealt with the disappointment of the committee's last recommendations. This committee has brought that up as a point of order and we will be dealing with where we go from here and that kind of thing. I think there was enough of a view on the committee that, because of the legal situation, we could not interfere in that. The second thing was that the timing of the release of the document may have precluded other things.

If I have not stated the committee's general understanding of why we did not come to particular grips with the whole issue that you are concerned about, please supplement any of the comments I might make. I just think for clarification that you might want to know that we are still concerned about the whole issue and will continue to address it, and have made statements that are on the record for this committee earlier on this week.

M. R. F. Johnston : Il faut dire que votre mémoire d'aujourd'hui exerce de la pression sur le comité pour faire des changements et pour se concentrer sur des questions de gestion. Vous avez proposé quelques amendements au projet de loi 75 et à la Loi sur l'éducation intégrale qui se concentrent sur la réalité, ou plutôt le manque de réalité de la gestion française dans la province et surtout dans les sections françaises. À mon avis, cela fait pression sur nous pour que nous nous concentrions davantage sur ces questions dans nos prochaines audiences, même s'il se pose des questions en cour et celles-ci, je les poserai aux fins de nos audiences publiques.

J'aimerais aussi vous en poser quelques-unes, la première étant une question de chiffres. Avez-vous une idée quant au nombre – ce n'est pas une tragédie; ce n'est que le métro, j'espère – de garderies francophones, pas bilingues, et la distribution de ces garderies dans la province ?

Mme Ladouceur : Moi, je ne pourrais pas vous les donner aujourd'hui ; je n'ai pas apporté ces chiffres-là avec moi, mais les chiffres sont certainement disponibles.

M. R. F. Johnston : Et vous, en avez-vous une idée là-dessus?

The Chair: In a number of communities, such as Ottawa and Sudbury, where day care is present, I think perhaps those figures may be available from the Ministry of Community and Social Services because they are separated out in the reporting function. Perhaps those figures could be made available for the committee. Just in case you did not have them, I know they are public information that is widely available.

Mme Ladouceur: Il y a un réseau de garderies francophones qui vient d'être établi il n'y a pas tout à fait un an. Je suis convaincue que ce réseau doit posséder la liste de toutes les garderies francophones dans la province.

M. R. F. Johnston: Quelle proportion est dans les écoles françaises? Quelle proportion de ce réseau de garderies se trouve dans les écoles françaises?

Mme Ladouceur: Vous voulez dire, quelle est la proportion d'écoles de langue française qui ont des garderies?

M. R. F. Johnston: Oui, mais il y a beaucoup de garderies dans la communauté et aussi dans les écoles. J'aimerais savoir si les écoles bilingues ou totalement françaises sont dans les écoles ou dans la communauté.

Mme Ladouceur: Ah, bon. La plupart des garderies qui sont complètement de langue française sont dans des écoles.

M. R. F. Johnston: Dans les écoles.

Mme Ladouceur: Je ne peux pas vous donner un chiffre, mais là encore on pourrait le fournir — mais la plupart. La plupart des garderies qui sont dans la communauté dans d'autres édifices, les garderies qui relèvent de la municipalité, proprement dit, sont soit bilingues ou de langue anglaise.

M. R. F. Johnston: Vu l'idée qu'il y a assez d'enseignants — je ne connais pas le mot français pour quelqu'un qui travaille dans une garderie, une gardienne — est-ce qu'il y a maintenant assez de gradués en français dans la province?

Mme Ladouceur: Non, la situation des francophones est semblable à celle des anglophones à ce niveau-là, tant pour les enseignants que pour les gens qui s'occupent des services de garde. Il y a une pénurie chez les francophones, pas seulement parce qu'il y a une pénurie générale, mais aussi parce qu'il y a moins d'endroits qui offrent le programme en français, donc nécessairement il y a moins de gens qui peuvent être formés. Ensuite, s'il y a moins de garderies, parce qu'on ne peut pas en établir là où on en voudrait en établir, les gens n'iront pas se faire former s'ils savent qu'il n'y a pas de places;

mais le besoin de garderie est là, et puis le besoin d'avoir des gens pour travailler dans les garderies est là aussi.

M. R. F. Johnston: J'ai oublié ma prochaine question. Peut-être que mon nom pourrait figurer sur la liste.

M. Furlong: Pour poursuivre les questions de M. Johnston, je ne sais pas comment ça marche dans toute la province, je vais parler seulement de la région de Durham, mais je sais qu'on a un centre culturel qui est bien actif et je ne peux pas vous dire maintenant s'il y a là une garderie ou non. Même s'il y en avait une, est-ce qu'il y a des collègues ou des universités qui vont offrir des programmes pour former des enseignants, pour enseigner ou pour être là dans les garderies?

Pour ce qui est du centre culturel à Durham, c'est là où on trouve les gens des conseils scolaires. Je ne sais pas s'il y a une sorte de liaison qui sert à préparer des programmes pour le centre culturel, pour desservir la population francophone, mais je sais que dans des régions de la province il n'y a rien, il n'y a pas de centres culturels. Pouvez-vous me donner une idée, disons dans les environs de Toronto, si ça va mieux ici, à Cornwall, à Ottawa?

Mme Ladouceur: J'ai l'impression que c'est beaucoup plus facile dans une région comme Ottawa ou peut-être même Sudbury parce que la concentration de francophones est plus grande. Evidemment à Ottawa, maintenant avec un conseil de langue française, c'est encore plus facile parce qu'on peut déterminer soi-même qu'on va utiliser cet espace-là et on n'a pas besoin de demander la permission à personne. Alors c'est plus facile que dans une région comme Toronto.

A Toronto, il y a plusieurs problèmes: il y a la dispersion dans la région; il y a la dispersion des francophones et la garderie est peut-être loin. Ensuite, il y a la difficulté d'obtenir de l'espace à l'intérieur d'une école. S'il y a un centre culturel et qu'il y a de la place dans le centre culturel pour qu'on puisse établir une garderie de langue française, c'est magnifique, mais comme vous l'avez dit, ce n'est pas partout qu'on retrouve un centre culturel. Même s'il y en a un, parfois il n'y a pas l'espace. Pour ce qui est des professeurs, on a besoin de plus de programmes pour former les enseignants et les gens qui travaillent dans les garderies, ça c'est clair de la même façon qu'on a besoin de plus de garderies.

M. Furlong: Moi ça m'inquiète un peu, surtout avec les francophones en Ontario, quand ils ont demandé au gouvernement de créer des positions pour dire que les francophones ont des

besoins particuliers. Je me demande parfois, si on prend l'idée que la protection de la culture française, si on pèse la valeur du programme qui sera offert. Par exemple, si vous avez un programme et que vous n'avez pas d'enseignants pour donner un bon programme, c'est vrai que vous allez protéger – un enfant va commencer par parler français, après il va penser en français et il va garder sa culture. En même temps, est-ce qu'il y a un avantage ou un danger que, s'il n'y a pas assez d'enseignants pour donner un programme approprié, quand il va se présenter dans les secteurs de l'éducation peut-être il va payer un prix pour ça ?

Mme Ladouceur : Ce n'est certainement pas l'intention des francophones d'avoir des services de garderies de deuxième ordre. Si on ouvre une garderie, les gens qui vont l'ouvrir vont s'assurer que les gens sont là pour offrir le service. Je pense que la même situation se pose chez les anglophones ; il y a une pénurie chez les anglophones aussi. Alors je pense que la pénurie s'est généralisée ; ce n'est pas juste spécifique aux francophones.

Ce qui est nécessaire, ce qui est spécifique aux francophones c'est que, pour un enfant, surtout quand un enfant est dans un milieu où il est très minoritaire, s'il n'y a pas de garderies de langue française et que ses deux parents travaillent, la seule place où il va se faire garder c'est chez un voisin probablement ou bien dans une garderie bilingue, mais dans une garderie bilingue il va parler anglais.

Interjection.

Mme Ladouceur : Probablement au moins la moitié du temps, probablement plus que ça. Si c'est chez une voisine ou un voisin, ce sera probablement une voisine ou un voisin anglophone aussi parce que s'il est dans un milieu très minoritaire, les chances sont que les gens autour de lui parlent anglais, alors l'enfant va passer la grosse majorité de sa journée éveillée dans un milieu anglophone. Alors, c'est pour ça qu'on dit que ça prend une cohérence entre la famille et le milieu où l'enfant se trouve pendant la journée, que ce soit à la garderie, à la maternelle ou bien au jardin.

Il est clair qu'on veut des garderies, des maternelles et des jardins mais on en veut d'excellente qualité, de la même qualité que ce qu'on offre aux anglophones. Cela est fondamental.

The Chair: Do you have a supplementary on that question? New question? I will just see if there is anybody else.

M. R. F. Johnston : J'accepte totalement votre idée de l'importance particulière des garderies françaises pour se battre contre l'assimilation. Je suppose que les propositions, les recommandations qui sont dans votre mémoire ne sont pas totalement nouvelles. Avez-vous proposé ces sortes de changements dans les lois et dans le processus au ministère de l'Éducation récemment ?

Mme Ladouceur : Bien, on a déjà présenté un mémoire – Il y a un comité qui a siégé sur les garderies il y a peut-être un an, un an et demi. On avait présenté un mémoire dans lequel on a fait les mêmes points. Ensuite, pour ce qui est de l'espace et du pouvoir de déterminer qu'une école puisse avoir de l'espace, que ce soit pour une garderie, une maternelle ou un jardin à temps plein ou ce qu'on voudra, ce sont des positions qu'on revendique depuis même avant que la Loi 75 soit adoptée, parce qu'on aurait souhaité qu'elle soit adoptée avec ces dispositions-là. Comme elle ne l'a pas été, bien, on continue à demander qu'elle soit amendée. Ce n'est certainement pas nouveau ; c'est clair que ce n'est pas nouveau.

Ce qui est nouveau, ce sont les initiatives du discours du trône qui maintenant ont mis tellement l'accent sur l'ouverture que le gouvernement a aux jardins à temps plein en particulier. Alors, on se dit : « Bien, raison de plus. Si le gouvernement lui-même reconnaît dans le discours du trône que c'est d'importance primordiale, bien, raison de plus pour laquelle on devrait pouvoir aller de l'avant. »

M. R. F. Johnston : Dans ce secteur, spécifiquement, dans le secteur des jardins à temps plein, avez-vous parlé avec le gouvernement concernant le besoin de fonds d'immobilisation aussi ?

Mme Ladouceur : Oui.

M. R. F. Johnston : Quelle sorte de réponse avez-vous reçue ? Parce que c'est un différent argument que les anglophones peuvent opposer, me semble-t-il.

Mme Ladouceur : Jusqu'à maintenant, la seule réponse qu'on a eue c'est l'argent qu'on a reçu quand les fonds d'immobilisation ont été annoncés. L'an dernier il n'y avait rien ; maintenant les fonds d'immobilisation pour cette année n'ont pas été rendus publics encore, alors, compte tenu des circonstances, peut-être que le gouvernement va se pencher sur la chose et qu'il va être un petit peu plus généreux dans cette direction-là.

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Juste un exemple : la section catholique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton vient de décider d'ouvrir des jardins à temps plein à compter de septembre 1990 ; on a pris la décision lundi. Selon l'analyse que nos administrateurs ont faite de la situation, les octrois, les subventions qu'on va recevoir pour le programme, ça va couvrir les enseignants, etc, mais ça va nous coûter un petit peu plus que 800 000 \$ en dépenses d'immobilisation au départ.

Alors, ça, il va falloir aller le chercher soit sur les taxes ou bien il va falloir aller chercher des obligations où, je ne le sais pas exactement, parce qu'on commence à peine à regarder notre budget. Mais c'est une dépense importante, et si c'est une dépense aussi importante que ça pour un conseil, qui n'est quand même pas riche — mais il n'est pas aussi pauvre que certains petits conseils en province — imaginez-vous ce que ça peut représenter dans les endroits où les francophones sont encore plus dispersés.

M. R. F. Johnston : J'espère que cette fois nous pourrions avoir quelques recommandations plus précises dans notre rapport qui pourront peut-être exercer un peu plus de pression sur le gouvernement pour que celui-ci effectue des changements.

Mme Ladouceur : Merci.

Mme O'Neill : Merci, Madame Ladouceur, pour un excellent mémoire.

Aux pages 7 et 8, you bring to us there a whole new situation that I do not think anyone else has brought. The first paragraph I have difficulty with, because you say that the new intervention regarding adding space to the new schools in some cases has made less space for francophone students. Am I hearing you? I really cannot understand that. I know the Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton has not yet had a new school, so this must be somewhere outside of Ottawa. Would you tell us how more space could mean less space?

Mrs Ladouceur : This is a situation that occurred in schools for which the funds were approved before the announcement for day care came out, so the school had been planned with no day care space looked at. It was approved and they started building the school. Then the announcement came out and of course to the population, automatically this is a new school. But there is a hole in the ground; it is not a school yet, therefore there has to be a day care in there. The government said so, there are funds for it;

but you do not have funds for it because you have had your school approved prior to that.

So what happened in those cases is that the boards generally responded to the population's request, to the community's request, by accommodating the day care, and to double the school that was not sufficient for the needs that it had been built for, either they added to it—I can give you the example of Des-Pionniers in Cumberland: We added to that school, but luckily we had not dug a hole; we were still in the architectural plan stage so we could do it—but a lot of schools ended up having to tag on portables—

Mrs O'Neill : To accommodate the expectations.

Mrs Ladouceur : —to be able to do all of this within the walls that had been planned prior to that. This is a limited problem, because the schools that were initiated after the announcement do not have that but still, it is a problem for those schools and it has cost them money.

Mrs O'Neill : I am very happy to know you are going to have the full day on KP duty. I remember coming here in 1979 with some members of your present board making that very request of Bette Stephenson and I am glad that you are going to be one of the first to take it up. The \$800,000 that you are talking about there, is that to do with the renovations that will be necessary in the spaces you have determined?

Mrs Ladouceur : They will mostly be portables that are going to be added.

Mrs O'Neill : You are going to use portables.

Mrs Ladouceur : Not necessarily for day care. We might move things around. I do not know, that has not been decided yet and it might vary from one school to the other.

Mrs O'Neill : You might be interested in reading Hansard of 17 January. We had quite a nice discussion on that in this committee. I hate to ask the question on Bill 75, because it is so complex and I know it has all kinds of tentacles and tangents and all the rest, but this then comes under "common jurisdiction and the usage of space." Is that what the problem is? Is that even in schools that are designated as francophone schools within the bill, the boards that have the French sections?

Mrs Ladouceur : If it is a French school and you want to allow the community to come in and have day care, you will need to have renovations done to the school because it has to meet the specifications of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the renovations need the approval of the whole board. We did it at La

Vérendrye, at the Carleton Roman Catholic School Board before the French board was constituted. All the decisions with respect to the modifications had to come to the full board.

Mrs O'Neill: And that has stayed the same?

Mrs Ladouceur: That is still the same. In Carleton I would not say it went easily, but it was not all that difficult because of the context. In areas where francophones are in a very small minority, they go to their board and they say, "It should not really cost you any money, because Comsoc is paying." But there are always inconveniences, there is staff time, a whole

bunch of little accidental things get incorporated and most times the majority will say no. It is a situation that is very frustrating, because you want to help the community and you are prevented from doing it.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I appreciate again your presentation. There will be a steering committee conference call on Monday. We are still trying to work that out as to the time. This committee stands adjourned until Monday 5 February.

The committee adjourned at 1646.

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Individual Presentation:

Young, Noel, Professor, Early Childhood Education, George Brown College of
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Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education

Éducation de la Petite Enfance

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Monday 5 February 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday 5 February 1990

The committee met at 1020 in room 151.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

ÉDUCATION DE LA PETITE ENFANCE (suite)

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, in the interest of time and not to keep our delegation waiting, we will proceed and call this meeting to order. After a fun-filled weekend in Sudbury with the Sudbury Snowflake Festival, we are indeed hale, hearty and ready to go. I welcome a number of new people to the committee today and hope they enjoy the day as much as we do, Mr Philip.

Our first order of business is Dr Richard Schabas and Dr Roch Khazen from the Ministry of Health. Perhaps you can come up and more formally introduce yourselves to this committee and proceed. Thank you.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Dr Schabas: I am Richard Schabas. I am the director of the public health branch in the Ministry of Health and the chief medical officer of health. Roch Khazen is the manager of our health promotion service within the branch, who is primarily responsible for those public health programs that I think are of concern to this committee. We are here at your invitation and for, I guess, whatever information you would like.

The Chair: That is a good way to start perhaps. During our deliberations we have heard a number of deputants who refer to health programs and the importance of early childhood identification and exploring the linkages between the education system in the Ministry of Health. Perhaps we could use that as a springboard to get started.

You might want to outline for the committee your understanding of how those linkages work and then we will open it up to questions. If everybody on the committee is on the same wavelength then we can proceed in that manner. How is that? We will get started that way.

Dr Schabas: Let me begin. I do not know if the members of the committee are familiar with this document. These are the guidelines to the

mandatory health programs and services. The importance of this document is that within the organization of public health in the province there are 42 boards of health which are set up as independent boards of health that basically have responsibility for their own administration and for their own programming.

Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1983 the minister has the authority to set minimum standards through the operations of guidelines like this or regulation. We have just completed a major review and revision of these guidelines to try to reflect the new directions in health that the Ministry of Health is supporting. And included in that was a review of the role of public health departments in early identification of things like hearing, vision and speech deficits.

This has been an area that public health has been involved with for many years. The previous set of guidelines had mandated that there be screening for hearing and vision at two screenings within the first two years of school. That is approximately what it says.

The concern with that was the reflection that, first of all, the yield of that screening process—particularly of the second screen—was extremely small, particularly in the context of identifying serious permanent deficit which was the intent of the program. Also, the feeling, and certainly the strong advice that we received from educators, was that the real value in detecting these problems was to detect them as early as possible.

If you detect them two years after school entrance that is not a very productive thing to do. In fact, there is some argument that even if you get them at the age of school entrance that may be too late in some areas to make an impact. So the direction that we took with these guidelines was to try to focus public health efforts at or before school entrance. The way the guidelines read is that they effect screening for hearing, vision and speech no later than school entrance, the policy direction being to try to get them into day nurseries and out into the community.

We are developing some program standards to support that; to give them some more specific guidance as to how they actually operationalize that. But at the very latest, the screening has to be in place by the time of school entrance.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess I would like to know a little bit about who does the screening, how long does the process take; that kind of thing. Is every child screened in grades 1 and 2? Is that what I gather you mean by school entrance, you are talking about, at this stage, grades 1 and 2?

Dr Schabas: The way the old guidelines read was two screens within the first two years. I can maybe quote them to you precisely.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was wondering if that includes junior kindergarten-senior kindergarten or whether that includes just one of the two.

Dr Schabas: Which ones are we looking at?

Dr Khazen: This is the first one.

Dr Schabas: Yes. Essentially, that there be a review at school entrance and another one within two years. So the intent was that—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Grades 1 and 3.

Dr Schabas: No. Hopefully, junior kindergarten and grade 1 but, of course, not all students enter school in junior kindergarten. So the bulk of the screening is done at school entry. It depends on where the kids enter school. Under the old guidelines they had to be screened at school entrance and at two years hence. So if they entered in grade 1 it would be in grade 3; if they entered in JK, it would be in grade 1.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So you are telling me that wherever there is JK at the moment, all the children in JK will have had this screening; that will be the presumption of when school entrance is; that part-time involvement with the school system will be—

Dr Schabas: That is correct, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So that is 80 per cent of the kids in the system at 60 per cent of the boards? Is that right; something like that?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do I have the figures wrong? I notice you are shaking your head.

Ms Mathien: Backwards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Backwards. It is 80 per cent of the—

Interjection.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Right.

The Chair: I would not worry—I thought that was what he said, too.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is what I said. I am sure that is what I said. At any rate, that does not matter. It is only Monday morning and you cannot expect these things to be necessarily correct.

So 80 per cent of the kids of that age are already being screened at age four, those now in the system, and then again in grade 1.

Dr Schabas: That is right, but I think the feeling was that the screening would be much more effective, in terms of being able to do something about it, if it in fact could be done even earlier.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is why, I guess, I wonder why your new guideline is so mealy-mouthed, if I can put it that way. Why on earth do we have “at or before,” which obviously allows a board of health to do it “at” and 80 per cent of the kids are already being done at “at.” Why are we not much more rigorous in your guideline in terms of making sure that every child, at an earlier age, is being screened? Because of everything we have been hearing—and I think you are recognizing, in terms of the difficulty of waiting until a child is four years old and there is language development, etc.

1030

Dr Schabas: I think, certainly the intent of the program standards, when they are fleshed out, which is under development now and will be completed, we hope, by June of this year, will be more directive, in a sense, of—what is published in the guidelines is, in fact, just the skeleton of what the programs will look like. That is true for all of the guidelines. So there will much more direction about getting involved, particularly in day nurseries, but I think in other settings.

I think the problem, though, is that there is no other clear point of access to children after birth until school entrance that in fact applies absolutely to all children, that can be set as a standard. But you are absolutely right, the intent is to get to them earlier. That is why we shifted the guidelines from putting a lot of public health resources, particularly in the second screen, into children who were already well established in school. And the yield, as I said, from the second screen was essentially zero in most cases. To try to shift the resources earlier, actually coming up with the wording that provides a satisfactory direction—and that is a little harder—is what we are trying to do.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree that the school is the only uniform institution that we have, at the moment, where you could get to the children at this stage. But that is a problem; that is a structural difficulty for attaining an earlier screening. It is sort of the well-baby clinic kind of concept. And obligatory kind of reportings-in surely would also be useful for children who are

two or three years of age, would it not; developing a new structure, in other words?

Dr Schabas: We do not have obligatory well-baby clinics. Well-baby care, for the most part, is provided through private doctors in this province.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. No, I am just saying that if you have a structural problem of the institutional framework for getting to all kids—not starting until age four, and we are recognizing that is too late for some of the deficits that can be identified if a child is not moved into a publicly funded day care system where there is a chance they may be found, etc—surely what we need is some sort of new institutional framework for getting that screening done earlier, if the school is not going to be the place it can be done, rather than saying “at or before.” Because, again, for those kids who are not going to be in group day care or maybe—I just do not see how that policy guideline, in other words, is going to change much from where we are at the moment. I guess that is all I am saying.

Surely the board of health, which is going to have all its resources stretched anyhow, it seems to me, as has been the case lately, is going to still say, “Our easiest time for us to be able to manage this; the most economical means of using our staff, is going to be when that child enters the school system because that is when they are all there,” rather than trying to develop some new institutional framework.

Dr Schabas: I think the issue you are pointing out is not a difference of intent, because the intent of the program—the issue is one of establishing guidelines that can be codified and supported. There is simply no mechanism for saying we must screen all children at any other specific cutoff between birth and school entrance that is in any way measurable and definable that way, unless you are going to set up, as you say, a whole new structure for child care, which obviously has implications that go far beyond hearing and vision screening.

The Chair: Could I just break in on a supplementary? With the number of visits that the health nurse makes within a certain period after birth and—in some cases, some of those kinds of screening situations would be identified in a very preliminary way and referrals made at that point in time. Is it not perhaps picking up the grossest kind of situations and then referral back, or information given? Is that one of the reasons that the public health nurse visits? I realize it is not a formal screening that you do on a mass basis, but at least it is some indication very early

on that is happening. I just wanted to clarify that as a kind of starting point.

Dr Schabas: There are other elements in our healthy children's program which certainly can effect that and one that you mentioned is the post-natal visiting, which is targeted particularly at high-risk situations, high-risk mothers and infants. But the parental education and other components of the program that would serve to assist the parents in identifying apparent hearing and vision problems and ensuring that the parents obtain proper primary medical care for their infant, is another potential avenue. I think parental education and other contacts with public health nurses are a part of that, as well, and go along with the formal screening program.

The Chair: Okay, the mandatory situation would be the visit from the health nurse. He or she visits on the list provided by the hospital, or however you do it, but the parenting situation that you are talking about is not mandatory across the province, just to clarify.

Dr Schabas: It will be mandatory that the board of health offers the service. It is not mandatory that parents attend.

The Chair: Yes, okay, that was a clarification.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess my difficulty at the moment is our gap between neonatal requirements and the school age situation. It may be that—we have had opposition in the province before from the medical profession and others about well-baby clinics and some version of the British model. Maybe that is not politically practicable in this province, given the nature of the positions that have been taken historically, but it strikes me that we need something that is fairly institutionalized in terms of requirement if we are actually going to get to those who are missed. I am thinking here it is mostly around—I think we do pretty well on hearing and vision these days, but I think the speech side of things is an area where all of us would recognize enormous difficulties still.

I guess I am trying to get an idea of where we are at the moment. What sort of interaction is there between the child care centre network out there and the public health system at the moment? Are there a lot of day cares which are inviting public health in to do this kind of screening; that a lot of them are making major referrals? Can we say that institution at the moment is helping identify more and more of these kids in need? Can you fill us in a little bit about that?

Dr Schabas: I think there is certainly a growing recognition from the public health side, and has been for a number of years, about the key importance of day nurseries for a variety of things: child development, identification of health problems, communicable diseases, immunization, a whole range of issues that are of key importance. And day nurseries are certainly a growth area for public health services and that is, I think, very much reflected in the new guidelines.

But, on a practical level, speaking from my own experience as local medical officer of health, we found considerable willingness by most day nurseries to let us come in with our programs. There was some sort of legislative entrée. Public health inspectors and public health nurses had some different kinds of duties that they would come and perform which gave us sort of a formalized contact once every two or three months or more, depending on whether there were problems. But the offering of services of parenting education, health promotion kinds of things and screening programs, was very much on the upswing, certainly in my health unit, and I think that is generally true across the province.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is there any statistical information that can be provided to us, or would all we would get be the sort of anecdotal kind of thing that you are telling me about? Has anybody been sort of gathering information on that in terms of the quantity and quality of contacts and then the results, in terms of what we are talking about here, or early identification?

Dr Schabas: Because of the way the old guidelines were written, which did not have quite the same focus, I think, on day nurseries that these reflect, that was left more up to the individual boards of health. They would have statistics on what services they provided and on the growth of those services and so on. Certainly, I think that would vary to some extent from health unit to health unit, but I think you would probably find that in most there has been quite a substantial increase in those kinds of services. That is what I would expect.

Mr R. F. Johnston: And is that with the private system, as well as the public system; of nonprofits, as well as the for profit, do you know?

Dr Schabas: I do not think that most public health departments draw a distinction between the two.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am wondering if the two systems do; in other words, if they are more or

less accessible. Because, at the moment, there is no legislative mandate, as you say, and therefore the initiative comes from public health often to get a response. I am just wondering if there is uniformity there within the organized group day care, or whether we see some differences, depending on whether they are municipally based or nonprofit-based or for profit.

Dr Khazen: I think the nonprofit probably is more receptive to get the public health. In that sense, the services are more available for them because they request them. Maybe the private feel the parents already know and they are aware and they might go to the private sector, I mean the physician, for such screening.

1040

I would like to add a couple of comments. If you look at the high-risk newborn, it means a newborn who has some difficulty at birth, for various reasons. The public health system focuses then that this is the physician's responsibility to follow through if that child is to be tested or retested for vision and hearing. We concentrate on the general population, on the population at large in that sense, and they feel that they could reach most of them, if not at school entrance, at day nurseries and day care centres. They have been received quite well, and in the new guidelines it says you have to provide support services to the providers of care in those day nurseries. It is being re-emphasized again and again.

You asked Dr Schabas about data. We are developing indicators about whether we are reaching our goal. Within that, there is the question about how many children you identify for the first time and at what age. We would like to know what is the incidence first, and the group we are reaching, compared to the base population, what is the ratio or the rate, but this is in the future. Indicators in draft were just finalized recently on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would be interested in seeing final copies of the draft when you get them, whichever is policy for you to do. Do we have many data? I mean, the presumption of high risk is always not full-term and not regular weight, or evident problems at that birth, etc.

We have had people come before us whose children were full-term. It seemed like they were well babies at that point but then developed problems very quickly in the first couple of years. I am wondering if there has been any gathering of statistics around our presumptions of high risk that we have had in the past and whether or not there is some argument that there

is a significant enough group that will have difficulties that are not caught within that particular screening at the neonatal and prenatal end of things. Do we have that information at the moment, whether or not there is a significant number of those?

Dr Schabas: No, I do not think we have that specific information. I think one of the other perspectives on this is that, clearly, there is no public health system that is going to be able to provide periodic screening throughout that period.

I think one of the presumptions is that the primary care system of medical care is supposed to be detecting a good deal of the problems in that intervening period. One of the roles that public health tries to play, particularly with high-risk parents as well as with high-risk babies, is to ensure that they are linked up with adequate primary care services. I think the assumption is that, yes, using the infants' risk status as the sole measure, there may be some children with hearing or vision deficits or speech and language deficits who will not in fact be identified that way, but if they are linked up properly with the primary care system, most of those should come to light through that, and I think that is part of educating doctors as well as educating parents.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was going to say it strikes me that it is. Again, in the area of speech development, this continuing problem, I think it is generally recognized that doctors are getting pretty good these days at the hearing and vision kinds of testing that we would want in those early years, but I am not sure that could still be said about the questions of speech development. I think there is a fair range of expertise out there.

I know other members would want to get in. I have one other question around training, and that is in terms of your connections with early childhood education, again, if we are seeing that sector as being helpful at this stage. Is there much involvement from the ministry or from the health units in terms of the development of curriculum at the early childhood education courses at the community college level and much participation in those courses in terms of this whole question of what are the signs that you should be looking for as an early childhood educator, whether it is around abuse or whether it is around these kinds of indicators for deficits?

Dr Khazen: We work closely with the Ministry of Community and Social Services. We have had quite a few interministerial work projects. A recent example is the one on child care for the ill child. We produced guidelines,

and there was presence from the early childhood educators on that committee, but as a whole, no, I think it is Community and Social Services that works with them more than Health. We have now a new interministerial committee between Health and Education to sort out some of the issues or some of the concerns that we have, or some of the common interests, for instance, as you said, abuse, the health promotion issues and so on. This is how far we have gone.

May I go back to the earlier question about speech? The difficulty with speech, compared with vision and hearing, is that there is no standard test at the moment like with vision or hearing and that is creating a difficulty. However, we are developing a test, if we can call it that. I do not know how the standards are going to be, because the nurses do not know what to look for or how to consider if there is a defect or not. They would like to have a standard to follow. There is one for vision and hearing.

Also, for the young child, you said between the neonatal and school entrance, at the end of one year, it is very difficult testing for hearing and vision, so there are some difficulties in relation to the age.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Just as a final follow-up, it seems to me that involvement by the public health officials in terms of the development of curriculum for early childhood education in the colleges—if there is a new ministry directive or development towards more involvement there, it just makes sense that the training also reflect that. Now they just encourage you to make contact, although we have been very frustrated, frankly, in terms of what the college system itself knows about its own programs. At the moment, it does not seem like they seem to know what the standards are across the board, let alone people like yourselves trying to gain entry.

Dr Khazen: There are four health units at the moment that once a year put on a big educational workshop for staff working in day nurseries, but it is on various subjects, so it is a bit limited in scope.

Mr Neumann: I have a number of questions. First of all, you mentioned that at the school entrance and within two years of school entrance you test for hearing, vision and speech. Are there any other kinds of tests that are used besides those three?

Dr Schabas: Under the old guidelines, they did not test for speech and language. That is an innovation of the new mandatory guidelines.

There is also, of course, a dental screening program. At school entrance there is a more

general health review which reviews things like the general history of the child's health, immunization status, those kinds of things.

Mr Neumann: Is there anything done to assist in identifying health problems that might relate to learning disabilities?

Dr Schabas: I think that is the purpose of the—

Mr Neumann: Besides the hearing and speech.

Dr Schabas: Yes. As I said, they do a general health review in terms of reviewing the child's medical history. The nurses are not in a position to do a physical examination beyond the hearing and vision, but they meet the parent at school entrance, usually at the time the children register for school, and try to determine a profile of the child's health history and health problems and, with the consent of the parents, will then discuss that if there is an item that impacts on the child's education. The purpose of that is that they can then provide or give the school some insight into those problems.

Mr Neumann: Would they look at things like fine motor control?

Dr Schabas: Not directly. Public health would not do a physical examination measuring that sort of thing. If there had been a problem identified previously, then they would obtain that through the history.

Dr Khazen: If I may add, a few years back, preschool screening was more comprehensive and there was the Denver developmental test done for the kids, which includes fine motor and co-ordination. However, experience has shown that most of the kids were within normal limits, and it was really time-consuming to do tests on all those kids. They switched back to taking a history saying, "Did you have any problem with the kid?" From the history, they will focus on the one that would need further evaluation. Then there is a referral to the physician. So the movement has switched from screening everyone to concentrating on the ones who, from the history, will require further follow-up.

1050

Mr Neumann: What percentage of newborns receive at-home visits by public health nurses?

Dr Khazen: A routine visit is not recommended for every newborn. They concentrate on what you call the risk list, meaning certain criteria, based on factors like it is a young mother, a first baby, a prematurely born baby or the mother had difficulty or the baby had difficulty. In various communities, we are

talking about maybe 25 or 40 per cent. It is variable.

Mr Neumann: Across Ontario, it would average around one third then?

Dr Khazen: About one third, yes.

Mr Neumann: At that point, what is involved in the screening or the advice to these parents?

Dr Khazen: There is talking to the mother about feeding patterns, sleeping patterns, elimination patterns and reaction to stimulation, things like that. Some nurses do undress the baby and look at the baby, but there is no specific activity they have to do. It is about visiting with the mother and trying to find out if she has any problems, rather than telling her, "You have to do all these things." This is part of the home visit.

Mr Neumann: We heard from the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario that there can be fairly early warning signs identified that perhaps should be monitored and followed up that may or may not develop into a learning disability when the child is approaching school age. What follow-up is done by the public health system and what communication exists for the preschooler from the public health system to the education system? If there is an identification of a child who might be at risk from a learning deficit perspective, is any of that information lost by not being communicated to the school system upon school entry?

Dr Schabas: Again, I think the information that the public health system would obtain about a child at various points and the degree of follow-up beyond the post-natal visit is very much individualized. It very much depends on the child.

For most of them, once the initial visit parental education and what not related to the post-natal visit is completed and the child is appropriately linked up with primary care services, there is no direct public health involvement with that child again until either there is a problem identified or he is in a day nursery or in school, but the information is kept and when a child reaches either day nursery or school entrance, that information is available to the public health department and, with the parents' consent, can be made available to the school as the basis for further information. It is still a confidential medical record, of course, so the public health cannot share it without that consent, but I do not think there is a particular problem with that information getting lost between the original identification and school entrance.

Mr Neumann: Perhaps I could make my line of questioning a little clearer by giving some examples. We know that with a child who experiences learning difficulties or learning disabilities in school, sometimes that comes right out of the blue and there may not have been any signs, but in other cases we know, for example, that some learning disabilities are genetic. We also know that some learning disabilities perhaps arise out of use of alcohol or smoking or drugs during pregnancy, so there might be early signs in terms of family history in terms of what the family situation was like during the pregnancy.

Does the public health system sort of have an early detection so that children whose families report that kind of experience are then monitored through so that the school system can then take a look at it, or so that some preventive work can be done with children who are at risk from a learning perspective, other than hearing and vision, and are monitored and given some early attention?

Dr Schabas: You are talking about intervention with the child before school entrance by the—

Mr Neumann: Yes, and communicating that to the school system once they reach school entrance.

Dr Schabas: As I said, I think that if the information is identified, I am not aware of communicating it to the school system as being a particular problem, but I think the willingness of public health to participate in linking these children up with educational services before school entrance is probably more determined by the availability of those services. Again, in my own experience, I am not particularly aware of boards of education providing that kind of preschool service, but I would think that, if and where they did, that would be a very natural link with public health.

Public health is trying to identify these problems early so that something can be done about it. That is the point of our post-natal visits, or one of the points of our post-natal visits. That is the point of trying to direct these three screening programs—the hearing, the vision and the speech and language—as early as is practical and possible so these kids can be linked up with services. But I guess in the final analysis it is going to depend to some extent on how many of those services are there for them to be linked with.

Dr Khazen: If I may add, the feedback from the public health is usually—not all the time—towards the primary care physician. If there is a problem or if the family is encountering problems with the child, the feedback is the primary

care physician or maybe mental health clinics or such services. The feedback is towards cure, stimulation, whatever. It does not go to education until the child reaches the school. So in the preschool areas, the feedback is towards the primary—

Mr Neumann: I think that is one of the weaknesses, because many physicians perhaps do not look for what I am talking about.

I know from having been a teacher that we are doing a lot better job today than we were 10 years ago in terms of earlier identification of learning difficulties. Kids would go almost through their whole school system without being identified as being learning disabled.

We heard some evidence before the committee of a study of street kids, and two thirds of them were found to have learning disabilities. Those were kids that were missed. We can see the payback for society in terms of early identification, and we are identifying many of them a lot earlier, but I am wondering then, in the talking with parents of newborns, in the questions that are asked, is there any attempt to identify perhaps the family history of learning difficulties that could be genetic that might say to the parents, “You know, because there is family history here, you should perhaps have your child tested before school,” and so on, some kind of advice in that regard?

Dr Schabas: I do not think that has been part of the protocol up until now. We are reviewing all of this as part of our revised guidelines, but no, I do not think specific questioning about a family history of learning disability has been part of it. I think it is an excellent suggestion and something we probably should look at including as we go through these guidelines.

Dr Khazen: There are questions concerning the prenatal course, like about, as you said, smoking and drinking and drugs, but not specifically like if you or your husband or somebody has a learning disability. I do not think that is the type of question.

Mr Neumann: That was going to be my next line of questioning. I will start off with a comment. When the people form the learning disabilities association were before us, they distributed a pamphlet, which I think was funded by the Ministry of Health to give out to women who are expecting a baby, and there was some good advice in there on the dangers of smoking, drinking and exposure to unnecessary drugs; you know, not taking drugs if you can avoid it during pregnancy. I think that is great, because an ounce of prevention can prevent a lifetime of difficul-

ties for a child and a growing adult. How extensively is this literature being used in the public health system with counselling people in the prenatal courses?

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Dr Schabas: One of the many changes in the guidelines has been a real refocusing of our prenatal efforts, specifically because of the information that you point out: the tremendous effect that things like smoking, drugs, alcohol and proper nutrition have on perinatal outcomes and in fact on the child's life. All the evidence suggests that to have an impact theory you have to focus your intervention either very early in pregnancy or before conception if it is to have an impact.

In the past the focus of prenatal intervention by public health was third trimester prenatal classes, which are all very well and good for preparing you for labour and delivery but really not an appropriate time for intervention for these other very important things. The focus in the new guidelines for perinatal intervention is pre-conceptual education and counselling and first trimester identification and education.

Because of exactly what you say, we are trying to focus our prenatal efforts where it will have an impact on exactly these kinds of problems.

Mr Neumann: That is excellent. I am pleased to hear that because, from what I have read of foetal alcohol syndrome, foetal alcohol effect and so on, the greatest damage is done in the first trimester and then in the last trimester. It is great to get that as early as possible.

Dr Schabas: Unfortunately, that is the problem. It is a problem with learning disabilities to some extent too, but certainly an issue with prenatal intervention is that the individuals who are most needy of your services are the ones whom we have found traditionally to be hardest to reach with public health programs. So it does make some of these efforts much more labour-intensive, which they will be, but I think potentially with a much greater payoff.

Mr Neumann: I had a final question. I had a comment just last week in talking with a retired public health nurse that public health nurses should be asked about these issues of early identification of possible learning problems later on because they often can be the first to spot a problem. However, the comment was made that the education officials do not have proper respect for what a public health nurse might provide. Do you sense any of that?

Dr Schabas: If we are at the level of anecdotes, not within my own experience, no. I think my own experience is that boards of education have very good relations with boards of health and are quite respectful of the information they produce but I cannot be certain that that is the case everywhere in the province.

Mr Philip: One of the concerns that we were talking about earlier and that arises out of Mr Neumann's questions is the co-ordination among ministries. You talked about—did I understand you correctly?—a task force to try to look at the interrelationships of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and your ministry. Are there also similar task forces between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health? I wonder if you could elaborate on what the purpose is of each of those task forces and when you expect to be publishing anything on it or releasing the results of the findings.

Dr Schabas: One of the lessons that I am not sure we learned but certainly was reinforced by the review of the mandatory health programs and services was the interaction between education and health and how many of our key public health programs are not just for young children. It is, if anything, even more true for adolescents when we get into the area of smoking prevention and sex education and the like, which are so important in later years, that we need close co-operation and good understanding between boards of education and boards of health.

As part of the consultation with the core programs, we are very much involved with the Ministry of Education. It had an opportunity to comment and discuss with us and also identify the need to have some sort of standing relationship between the ministries to focus on public health programs.

We have created a standing committee between my branch and my area in the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. The first meeting is being set up for later this month so I cannot prejudge exactly how well that will work but at least there will be this more formal mechanism for making sure they know what we are doing and we know what they are doing so we can co-ordinate services.

Mr Philip: So there have been no specific terms of reference as to exactly what you are going to be looking at jointly, initially, and there is no timetable or any set of objectives that you can actually share with us at this point in time.

Dr Khazen: No, it is like a standing committee for three years to sort out some of the common interests that we have under the new guidelines

and that they have in their curriculum concerning tobacco use prevention education, drug use prevention and nutrition promotion. This was set up to sort out those things. It is not a task force to present a report, actually; it is to sort out the common ground and how we can assist each other, not only at the ministry level but at the local level too.

Mr Philip: One of the things that Mr Neumann was talking about earlier was the effects on the foetus of drug abuse, smoking and other habits. I guess one of the concerns I have had is that even if somebody wants help with a problem, there are some good programs out there but there are also an awful lot of snake oil salesmen. The example I would give is that there has been no evaluation, to my knowledge, by this government of the various stop-smoking programs, and indeed public servants can go out and be subsidized at buying snake oil in the hope that it stops them from smoking, and that is just one example.

The public often want a quick fix, and if people say that for \$90 they can zap you with something or do something to you or give you a special pill or give you a little computer or something and it is going to work miracles. Tax money is going into a lot of these programs, which I guess have not been very well evaluated. From a public accounts point of view if not from a human point of view, I wonder what is being done to evaluate all of this stuff that is out there and people are paying for in the private enterprise market and may be of little or no value.

Dr Schabas: Certainly we recognize the importance of—to use the specific example of smoking—smoking cessation as a component of public health programs in this province. One of the components of the new mandatory core programs is the notion that boards of health have to ensure that there is access within their health units to smoking cessation programs. That does not and is not intended to put them in a position of reviewing and, I guess in a sense, licensing those smoking prevention programs. I am not sure there is any authority to do that, but I think the intent of that is to make sure that there are smoking cessation programs in every health unit that address some minimum standards of efficacy and program standards. Part of the fleshing out of the guidelines will be coming up with a listing of those programs that are considered to be effective, and as well developing something that can be made available to the public health units if they choose to provide it themselves.

Mr Philip: I guess I have the problem, though, that when I look at those programs you have everything from anecdotal—you know, “Come on in because here’s Charlie Brown’s name and he stopped smoking in 24 hours by chewing this gum”—to those programs that have had longitudinal studies and that are fairly well researched. The problem comes to the dollar figure, and I have no research to back this up, but my strong suspicion is that a lot of the cheaper programs and the quick fix programs probably are pretty ineffective but they are very attractive and they have good salesmen and they put their money into salesmanship rather than into research. It just strikes me that before spending a lot of tax dollars it might have been worthwhile had the ministry at least reported which programs have been researched and the results of any longitudinal studies to show which ones are working.

Dr Schabas: I think the approach, though, that we are going to be trying to take through the public health departments is that they will have, either through services they provide themselves or through identification in their communities of other effective services, a place where at least people can turn if they want that advice on where they can access smoking cessation programs that have some indication of benefit. That is not a way, though, of preventing your snake oil salesmen from setting up shop and luring people into their programs. I do not think there is any way we can protect people from that.

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Mr Philip: I do not want to prolong this, but I guess my concern is that ministries are spending money on snake oil at the moment, and I think that it is not just the community out there and the community health groups that have an obligation. A lot of them are doing their research, and some of your ministries, I think, are doing their research on their own. It just seems to me that there should be a lead ministry that takes the various programs and says to all of the ministries: “We aren’t interfering with your right as an independent ministry to operate, but you should at least know that here is the research on these programs and here are the programs that have no research. If you want to buy them anyway, that is your business, but just be aware that the auditor may be around asking you why you spent money on this program when it is not researched or when it is ineffective.” I have not seen that, and it would seem to me that the Ministry of Health had some responsibility, along with perhaps Man-

agement Board, before stop-smoking was done even in the civil service.

The Chair: If I might, Mr Philip, there are other people waiting. I realize this is somewhat related, but we would like to bring it back because there are people who wish to bring questions directly dealing with the childhood aspect. That is why these gentlemen are here, and that is why we asked them to be here. I think I have allowed you enough latitude to ask some questions.

Mr Philip: It is a particular concern of certain people whom I know.

The Chair: Sure, I understand. I think you have covered the waterfront very fully.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would like to just go back to a few questions on the different aspects of the early ID side of things. Can you give me some idea at the moment of the—going back to speech problems again—waiting lists that are out there for speech therapy? My understanding is that in certain parts of the province, anyway, even if you are identified the problem it is very difficult then to get yourself on to a list quickly. I wonder if you can give me any information about this. So you identify; then what, with a child who has got some major speech development problems?

Dr Schabas: I cannot answer that specifically. There are about 12 boards of health that currently offer speech language therapy as part of the range of their programs. That is not one of the general public health programs; it is through a special budget. The intent there is that that is essentially to fill in gaps in areas of the province where, for one reason or another, the usual treatment services are not available. So certainly the intent is there through the operation of the boards of health to make sure that services are accessible provincially, but I cannot tell you whether there are waiting lists for those services or what the length of them is, and I am not in a position to comment on the other speech therapy services in the province at all.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What that would seem to indicate is that 12 out of 42 districts covered by boards of health require some gaps being filled. I presume there has been some sort of analysis to decide where this is required or where it is not, and there must be some idea about whether or not there are another 10 areas that need this kind of extra assistance or not. Even places like Windsor, large places like that, I know have had difficulty in the past. My general tendency has been to presume that many of the services that are

available are actually available in the very large metropolitan areas and not in the smaller cities.

Dr Schabas: The identification of need is usually done by the local board of health or the local district health council that comes forward with a request for funding. That is really where the services that are offered through the 12 boards of health came from: an identification that there was a gap in service and that the board of health was the most practical organization and the one most interested in providing that service locally. So again the pattern is, generally speaking, that those public health services are provided in the outlying parts of the province and not, by and large, in the major metropolitan areas, although there may be some exception to that. But by and large this is, as I say, filling the gaps.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you give us a list of the 12 so we have an idea?

Dr Schabas: I am sure we can have it for you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you tell us who in the Ministry of Health can tell us what is available in speech therapy across the province so we get some idea? If we make some recommendations about enhancing early identification along the lines of what you are trying to do, and maybe even going further than that, then one of the outcomes of that is, will you identify it, and if you cannot deal with it, or if the tendency is—we are hearing even in the second and third years of schooling—to say, “Let’s watch a problem for two years before we even initiate any special education kinds of outcomes for this,” then I think it is incumbent upon us to have some answers there as well, or some suggestions. Can you point us to who might have that information or get us that information?

Dr Schabas: We have a speech and language consultant in the public health branch who would at least provide you with information about the public health side of things. I am not sure if she would be able to provide you with the other.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just thinking about a note to the chair or to the clerk with the name of somebody else we can contact, just so that when we start to write this report, which we will be doing over the next month and a half or so, that information might come in and might guide us as we try to finalize our recommendations, that would be helpful.

The Chair: I would think maybe, just as a further note, that there are some boards of education that do this in lieu of public health because they work together on that. So it might

be misleading to say that there are 12 health units, because there may be other health units that contract to the board, and the board is the actual carrier, so I just wanted to add that so that we get that relationship straightened out to give us a truer picture. I think that is a fair assessment of what happens. So it is not only in health boards, it is boards of education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We should be able to get that from this individual clearly, and maybe also then be able to get some idea of whom you talk to about what it means in an individual instance if you identify a four-year-old child with major speech difficulties. What is the likelihood of time it takes, depending on where you are, to get that child into a therapeutic program and how long does the remediation take, etc? It is information that I think we need to have some grasp of—not necessarily expertise in, but some grasp of.

There are two other things I wanted to raise. One is the financial implications for your present methodology. Do you have any idea what public expense it is now to the boards of health across the province that do the kind of screening that is presently going on, for getting your new move back to try to do more with the preschool?

Dr Schabas: I cannot give you a definite answer to that. Among the other changes we are bringing in in public health is a change in the way that boards of health put together their budget to adopt a program-based focus for budgeting. That is being implemented this year, so I will be able to tell you that next year. But up until now, the funding, at least from the ministry end, has been strictly on a full-time equivalent staff level, so I cannot give you that number.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It makes it awkward to get some social policy sense of what the cost-effectiveness is, dealing with those kinds of arguments you always have to deal with in these matters. Do you have any idea of how much public health nurse's time or unit's time is spent on this kind of thing? Is that available?

Dr Schabas: For any individual health unit, that could be tracked because most of them, in fact, have an information system or utilize an information system that provides them with some numbers about number of hours. It would be possible, I think, to extrapolate from salary costs across the province and come up with at least an estimate of the cost of it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: People are always competing for dollars and there are arguments to be made, but obviously the assistance to people in terms of succeeding in the school system and

presumably, through that, succeeding in their working lives following that, is very large in terms of early identification. If we are going to make recommendations, as we may, in terms of increasing resources to public health to get to more of the kids earlier, then I think we have to get some idea of what the dollars are so we can start to deal with those kinds of responses that might come forward. Anything you could find us and we could get over the next month—

Dr Schabas: We could probably come up with an estimate, as long as you recognize that it will be a very crude estimate.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A movable ballpark is all right. There are a couple of other things that are coming out of the prescreening that goes on for kids entering the system, whether it is in junior kindergarten or grade 1. We have only been getting anecdotal information, but it does seem that various boards have very different protocols for the kind of interview process that goes on with a family and a child before the end of the school system. I forget who it was who told us, but there was one example of only a 15- or 10-minute interview taking place. One really wonders about the preparation for the kind of interview process that goes on with a family and a child before the end of the school system. I forget who told us, but it was one example where only a 15-minute or 10-minute interview was what took place. One really wonders then about preparation for the individualized child-based learning that child is going to receive, just how well that can be done.

I wonder if you have any information or any thoughts about the screening process the year that the child is entering the school system, about who should be involved, how it should be done. I am thinking about trying to identify things like problems of home life, malnutrition. I am thinking about, obviously, learning disabilities and the kind of expertise that is going to be required to be able to pick up some of the auditory retention problems, things like that, and then behaviour problems and psychiatric kinds of problems that might be there as well. It might be useful, if we do not have it now, to have some systematic protocol that was done for any child who was entering the system in terms of board interviews and that kind of thing.

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Dr Schabas: I think the public health side of the screening is perhaps a little more systematic than what you—I cannot reflect on the education, but there has been for some years an attempt to provide at least some systematic minimum

standards of the screening from the health side, and that will continue. I think, though, that what you are alluding to is that this whole process is going to be most effective, certainly within public health it has to involve a range of professionals. We have traditionally involved not just the public health nurse, but usually the immunization nurse and the dentist. I think the point you are making is that this still should be broadened to include the educators, as well that it should all be part of a sort of co-ordinated screening at school entrance. I agree entirely with that. I think that already happens in some of the boards. Again, because we are dealing with independent boards, both of health and of education, it is difficult enough for us to mandate what the boards of health do, and obviously we cannot mandate what the boards of education do. So a lot of that, beyond the minimum level, we can encourage and persuade. It does happen in a lot of places, but it is a little harder to mandate that kind of co-operation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will have to deal with that decentralization issue. Can you give me some idea of the psychiatric side of it, which we have not really talked about at all? We talked more about other kinds of health problems, but in your view, how are we doing in terms of the identification of kids with major psychiatric problems as they enter the school system? Again, it is (1) in terms of identification and (2) in terms of program.

Dr Schabas: Again, I think the identification of psychiatric problems at school entrance is part of the general health review for school entrance, so I do not know that there—aside from general questions about behaviour, obviously if there are flagrant behavioural problems, those are going to be identified. But that has the problem of anything incorporated in that health review, that it depends to a certain extent on what has already been identified and bringing that to the attention of the school and making sure there is proper provision made.

The other aspect is that I think a lot of these behavioural and psychiatric problems are identified after school entrance, and that is why there is this ongoing link with public health. There is a public health nurse assigned to each school in the province. Although he or she is not physically present there all the time, he or she is certainly available for exactly those kinds of issues to make sure that there is some consultation and some linkage with the health side of services when that is identified.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will just leave it at this, because maybe others want to get into this. But it does strike me, though, that we talk very differently about early identification of straight physical problems—vision and hearing and now in terms of speech—than we do in terms of the potential long-term disability and disadvantage within the education system for a child who comes in with severe problems, whether they were caused by—it could be physical problems of drug use, etc., but it also could be abuse, obviously, and that kind of thing, and the earlier we ID that, the better as well for that child's outcome.

Dr Schabas: I certainly absolutely agree with that. I think one of the technical problems which faces any screening problem is the availability of a screening test which can reliably identify those problems, and that is relatively easy to do for hearing and vision and gets progressively more difficult for these other issues.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you tell me what—I cannot remember; I should know, having sat through estimates for the Ministry of Health for many, many moons here—the differences in budget are for the boards? Are they all relatively similar in terms of the amount of money they get per population? I cannot remember.

Dr Schabas: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I remember the debates about this a number of years ago, and I guess I would like to have a better idea about what resource expectation is out there on a decentralized basis, as you rightly reminded us.

Dr Schabas: The funding of public health is a little more complex than for most other areas of health care, because there is a cost-sharing arrangement for public health between municipalities and the provincial government such that a certain proportion of the costs have to be covered by the municipality, which means that it is not totally under the Ministry of Health's control, the amount of money that will go. The amount of money that ultimately goes to any municipality is, in large measure, determined by the willingness of that municipality to fund its proportion of the costs.

In addition, of course, there are also other factors which mean that certain locations, like northern Ontario health units, in fact require higher per capita funding. But there is quite a spread in funding for general programs in public health.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Does that have an impact on what we are trying to talk about here in terms

of trying to systematize things? When you talk about a public health nurse being affiliated with every board, I remember a Scarborough board decision in recent times which really was moving public health out of the schools much more than had been the practice for a couple of decades before that. What is the range there in terms of the impact of this kind of—

Dr Schabas: The impact should not be in the area of the mandatory services. I think the intent of those mandatory services is to set minimum standards for public health. Certainly one of the estimates that has been made, based on the new mandatory core programs, is that every board of health, even the most poorly funded, have enough resources to at least provide the minimum standards of services. So the kinds of things I have been speaking about should be, and I very much hope will be, in place in every board of health by the time we finish the implementation in 1992.

The area where there are differences is beyond that, in the optional local services which are an important part of public health but which are, in that sense, much more dependent on the willingness of the municipality to produce the funding.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Be very specific, then, on this. What we are talking about here, your new guidelines, is it possible that the local financing component could affect some of these boards to make decisions to only do their screening at the entrance level, because you seem to be making that a minimum, rather than going back and doing whatever screening they can in the preschool fashion?

Dr Schabas: I do not think there is any question that the earlier you screen the more expensive it becomes, because the more difficult it is to find these children. Although the intent of the guideline under the program is to get boards of health out as early as possible to identify these children as early as possible, one of the factors that will affect that, as it will, I guess, the decree of success of any of those programs, will be the funding that is available.

Certainly when we finally define the minimum program standards, it will be necessary for every board to provide that. But going beyond that, because there are special problems in every board and in every health unit in every area that need to be addressed, is to some extent dependent on the willingness of the local people to come up with the money, yes.

The Chair: I do have other speakers. You had indicated earlier that—

Mr R. F. Johnston: It just strikes me that the one thing that comes out of that is the whole question about whether or not for these kinds of programs at the public board of health level there should be 100 per cent provincial funding so that does not become an issue. You say it is a complicated funding formula at the moment, but perhaps we need to make sure that we can reduce the minimum standard to a level which makes the programs available. But if that is putting too much of a financial burden that is going to inhibit other kinds of programs, maybe we have to talk about differentiated funding for this kind of screening. I just throw that out, not as something to put you on the spot with but from our perspective.

The Chair: Spoken like a true former board of health member. There are a number of issues that the municipalities—it is very good.

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Mr Neumann: I am reading from a document, produced by our legislative research service, summarizing recommendations which have already come before the committee. It states here:

"Learning difficulties should be identified and addressed in the preschool period. This could take place in a variety of settings. Public health nurses may be a useful option, given their contact with a high proportion of infants and young children. This requires specific training of these other professionals."

First of all, a reaction to that recommendation. This is from Dr Siegel and the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Two presenters mentioned this thrust. What training do public health nurses get presently, beyond training to be a nurse? Do they have special training and does that training involve preparing them to identify children who may have learning disabilities?

Dr Schabas: The qualifications of public health nurses are laid out in regulations. To be a public health nurse you have to either have a bachelor's degree in nursing or have done a diploma course beyond the registered nurse, a one-year diploma course. So the qualifications to be a public health nurse are more stringent than to be a registered nurse. I cannot comment in detail on what is actually the educational content of that, but I think in most cases they would get some education, some training in the area of early childhood development, which could certainly touch on that issue.

Those who, because of when they were trained or where they were trained, did not necessarily get that education, I think that in virtually all

cases the board of health would take responsibility for upgrading them if they are going to be in that sort of a program. Any public health nurse who is involved in a post-natal or an early childhood program should have, and I think for the most part does have, training in the area of early childhood development.

Mr Neumann: Are there any recommendations or mandatory guidelines from the Ministry of Health to boards of health that deal with in-service training for matters like this?

Dr Schabas: No, the approach we have taken is to require that boards of health provide the services and they do it with adequately trained and qualified staff. But we have not taken the position of actually specifying what the nature of the in-service education should be, no.

Mr Neumann: Has there been any monitoring or evaluation of the in-service training programs of public health units?

Dr Khazen: No, but the ones who are involved in screening from time to time are sent to attend courses; for instance, to London. I cannot remember the name of the school, a school for the deaf in London. They come here to the Canadian Hearing Society. Some of them come to the centre run by the city of Toronto on Davisville Avenue. I cannot remember the centre. So they send them to those centres where from time to time they get an upgrade and training in what they are doing. For vision the same thing: they go to the Hospital for Sick Children or to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to update their skills. For speech they need more training because, as I said, we do not have the tools at the moment. This is going to be one of the next ones in the training. These are the three areas where they get some—

Mr Neumann: Although that is great stuff, you have not mentioned anything that would assist them in sort of looking for the early warning signs for learning difficulties, which are often physiological in origin.

Dr Khazen: No, just basically the growth and development pattern in children and the standards within the norm and things like that, but not specifically physiologically to zero in on learning disabilities.

Mr Neumann: You mentioned earlier that a lot of emphasis is placed on the role of the family physician in all of this. I am a great believer in the role of the family doctor, but from personal experience, the doctors do not always know a great deal about identifying these kinds of problems, or if they do they are focusing in on

other matters and looking for problems that parents may come to them for. They are not perhaps as preventive-oriented as they should be in some cases; for example, Tourette syndrome. I am told by the neurologists and the doctors who do the final diagnosis that 80 to 85 per cent of the identification of Tourette Syndrome is done by parents who become aware of it and then the diagnosis is simply confirmed by the doctors. I see too heavy a reliance on the family physician for identifying learning disabilities as perhaps a weakness.

Dr Schabas: I think you are absolutely right that—without reflecting negatively on family doctors, because I do not mean to do that—it can be extremely difficult to identify some of these issues. I made the comment before that the availability of screening tests, of screening programs, is often driven by the availability of a reliable, easily applied test.

Of course, once you get into these other areas, these more complex and difficult areas to detect, it becomes very difficult to apply those kinds of standards; very difficult for public health nurses who, yes, have training in early childhood development and are in many cases very sensitive monitors of that, but they are not experts in all of the various neurological and psychiatric areas of child development.

One of the best screeners for all of these problems are the parents. That is part of the reason for the parenting education focus of our public health programs: it is to educate parents to the kinds of things to look for because they are the ones who are in the best position often to identify particularly these more subtle problems.

Mr Neumann: Parents as individuals. And what tremendous work these associations do, parents who have had the experience. Their kid may be beyond needing help, but they stay in and they stay involved to help other parents identify early on what the problem is. So many of these dedicated volunteers are so important to the whole process.

Dr Schabas: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: Anything else? All right. Thank you very much. We appreciate your appearing before us because it is important and I think the committee has had a lot of valuable information. We have made notes for you to come back with, or your officials in your ministry to come back with, which will be helpful for us, giving us direction with our report and recommendations. You have been very helpful and we thank you for your appearance.

To the committee, we will be returning here at two o'clock. You can leave your stuff here because we are not moving. Today we are still in

here. Tomorrow we will be in committee room 1. We stay in recess until two o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1136.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in room 151.

The Chair: I will call the meeting to order. Following past customs, and so that we can proceed and deal with a number of deputants today, I first welcome the folks from the Ontario Teachers' Federation, which I have sat across the table with on other venues and I appreciate. Beverley, maybe you could introduce your copresenters more formally for Hansard and then we could proceed. I turn the floor over to you.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Ms Polowy: Thank you very much. Today I would like to thank the select committee for the opportunity to present on behalf of the Ontario Teachers' Federation. I am Beverley Polowy, the president. I have with me today Margaret Wilson, our secretary-treasurer, and Ruth Baumann, an executive assistant with the federation, who is our liaison officer with the Ministry of Education. She will be taking a great interest in the deliberations of the committee, as she has already done.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation welcomes this opportunity to present its views on early childhood education to the select committee on education. The federation represents the 121,000 teachers employed by the public and separate school boards in Ontario and has had a continuing interest in the education and care of young children. I believe you have a written copy of our brief. I would like to go through it, highlighting a number of the points and issues that are raised, and then we will leave time for questions at the end.

In preparing this paper, we reviewed the positions that the federation has previously presented to commissions, the ministry and the government on the issues of early childhood education, and the papers are listed there for your interest. We have also brought for the research department one copy of each of those papers in case there is necessity for further investigation of any of the information.

The Chair: For the information of the committee, Dr Bob Gardner has all of the papers that have just been referred to. If any member wishes to peruse them at any time, they are available. Sorry to interrupt. Please continue.

Ms Polowy: Several strong themes emerged from this review and correspond with the themes that have been identified by Bob Gardner and

Allison Drummond in their background papers. These themes are: a strong commitment to the concept of early childhood education and a belief that there is a substantial research base supporting the value of quality early childhood programs to all children; an understanding and appreciation of the need for young children's learning experiences to integrate as much as possible the expectations of teachers, care givers and the home; a commitment to universal access and equality of educational opportunity for all children; and a recognition that services to young children are fragmented presently and that there would be a significant benefit to children and to their parents if services were co-ordinated.

In 1978, in the federation's submission to the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child, OTF stated, "We must provide an integrated and comprehensive system of services for children from age zero onward that is education oriented and devoted to their optimum physical, intellectual and emotional nurture." We asked at that time that the education community be invited to be an active partner in the children's services committees which were then pilot projects.

Later, in our submission to the cabinet, the relationships between education and children's services were once again addressed. This paper endorsed the concept of the community school. The model which was presented found that a team co-ordinating the various programs within a child care centre which would accept children up to age 10 would be a substantial benefit.

In the 1980 presentation to cabinet, the Ontario Teachers' Federation addressed its role in bringing about more effective programming and greater co-ordination, and I quote: "We are obliged in the interest of children to see that every element of the care mosaic is integrated into a whole that guarantees their optimum physical, emotional and intellectual nurture from infancy onward.... We want to interact with the people who create position papers in order to provide a learning orientation to their proposals for children." The same submission recommended a pilot project and school-centred day care and offered our services and co-operation in design, implementation and evaluation.

In 1983 OTF responded with positions for child care programs: the programs should be universally accessible; teachers and supervisors should have appropriate training and certification

in early childhood education; programs should be free to all children and publicly funded; attendance should be voluntary; programs should be available at all hours; programs should be delivered in schools or other locations; programs should be learning oriented and devoted to the emotional, social, intellectual and physical nurture of children; and programs should provide parenting training.

In May 1985 OTF once again responded, this time to a discussion paper on child care in the Metropolitan Toronto area. The paper goes on to call for an examination of the extent to which all child care initiatives move the early childhood education enterprise towards integration with the school system. I quote:

"It is only within the school system that cost-effective, universally available, accountable, state-of-the-art education for children from infancy onward can be achieved. To say Ontario cannot afford universally available early childhood education as part of the school system may be tempting. Fifty years ago we said we could not afford school busing, so thousands were unable to reach a high school. Then we decided we could afford busing and now everyone can attend high school. We afford what we want and need. We need early childhood education."

In 1986, in its response to the early primary education project, OTF concurred "that the research base...is now sufficient for the educational community to act with confidence in bringing about change and reform...and in the education of early primary children in particular.

The next section deals with the accessibility to early childhood programs and the integration of school and child care experiences. A theme throughout the literature is the need for preschool or early childhood education programs to be linked to and co-ordinated with the school. The accessibility of early childhood education programs can be the first stumbling block. Barriers to accessibility are twofold: first, access to information about available services and, second, the availability of services. Availability of services can be a problem to parents of all income groups, but is a particular concern to low-income and lower-middle-income parents who cannot afford the costs of unsubsidized child care.

The concept of family learning centres, which you will remember from the *To Herald a Child* report, could at a minimum provide parents with a database of available child care options, early primary schooling options, information on how to access subsidies where applicable, information about transportation and so on.

In 1985, in *The Clouded Crystal*, the OTF's submission to cabinet, OTF reiterated its support of family centres and supported the recommendations of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care that the government undertake the "development and co-ordination of programs offering a broad range of services to preschool and school-age children and their parents."

1420

On the issues in accessibility, there continues to be a serious shortage of available child care places. There are both insufficient spaces in absolute numbers and a serious shortage in the number of subsidized spaces available. Child care arrangements often interfere with access to kindergarten programs. Because the need for child care usually precedes enrolment in school, it is not uncommon to find child care arrangements driving decisions about schooling.

For example, the location of the existing child care service is not convenient to the neighbourhood school, requiring either that the child change child care services in order to attend a half-day school program or that elaborate and expensive arrangements be made for the midday switch; the neighbourhood school has no in-house child care services, again requiring that arrangements be made that will allow pickup and/or delivery of the child to half-day kindergarten; or the neighbourhood school has a child care program on the premises but there is no space available. In rural Ontario, these child care arrangements can be a much larger problem.

The logistics of juggling child care and school make parents find it easier to delay the entry of the child to school until the age of six, when schooling is mandatory and a full-day program is available.

The availability of appropriate physical space for kindergartens is an issue in a number of school boards. It is a problem in boards which are rapidly growing and where serious space problems existed even before the mandating of kindergarten programs. It is also a problem in those boards where existing school buildings do not have the appropriate physical facilities—large rooms, washrooms suitable for four-year-olds, etc—who are forced then into evicting a community user of space in order to make room for a kindergarten. When that community user is a child care centre, the problem is further exacerbated.

Financial resources must be available to school boards to provide appropriate physical space for kindergarten and the resource strategy must take into account the need to maintain and

integrate school programs with available and affordable child care.

The logic of the "seamless" or integrated day for a young child is unassailable. The difficulties in achieving greater integration seem to fall into several categories: availability of information, the improvement of communication, co-ordination of administration and reconciliation of conflicting regulatory requirements.

There must be access for parents to a database of information and this access must be community based. Information should cover both formal and informal child care services, availability of early school programs and information about transportation. They could also include information on the availability of health and other social services. The establishment of neighbourhood and community databases would also ease the identification of the barriers, often institutional or bureaucratic, to effective integration of services to young children.

Communication between educators and care givers must be facilitated. It is the kindergarten teacher who can be the focal point in a communications network. It is the kindergarten teacher who is the "catchpoint" and the logical centre of a communications network involving all the partners. If the kindergarten teacher is to become a facilitator in the integration of the child's experience, then that teacher must have the time and the professional resources available to do the job.

Some administrative co-ordination of school-based and housed programs for young children already occurs, usually by having the school principal sit as a member of the board of directors of the child care program. This is often on a more random basis and co-ordination with informal care givers is nonexistent.

The differences in regulatory requirements of school programs and child care services are an obvious outcome of the lack of effective provincial co-ordination. These are concrete matters which manifest themselves in staffing ratios, transportation requirements, the provision of meals and nutrition, the requirements of physical facilities and expectations about the way in which children are to be dropped off and picked up.

In conclusion, a review of the OTF presentations to the ministry, the government and other agencies over the past 12 years reveals a remarkable uniformity. The federation has consistently advocated increased and universal access to quality child care, the creation and funding of effective school programs for young

children, and increased co-ordination and integration of services using the local school as the community focus. It is discouraging to find that in 1990 so little progress has been made in unifying the services provided to young children, despite the research base and commonsense justification for such an approach.

In the article by Sharon Kagan in which she speaks of the US experience, she says: "Children's policies have simply grown, without an overall plan or design. There have been no codified developmental principles to guide policy development. Tackling the tough issues of inequity, discontinuity and fragmentation is the challenge we face today." Those issues apply equally to Ontario. We have an appropriate knowledge base about the needs of young children. What we now require is a comprehensive social strategy that cuts across bureaucratic and professional boundaries, and the political will necessary for change.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation believes that the select committee on education is in a unique position to draw together the plethora of research, reports and recommendations which have been made over the past decade or more, and to recommend action that will significantly change the quality and delivery of programs to young children in Ontario.

The federation has one recommendation: that the select committee on education make recommendations to the government of Ontario which will guarantee: (a) access to quality early childhood programs and services for all Ontario children, (b) the co-ordination of agencies and ministries responsible for services and education programs and the removal of bureaucratic barriers where necessary, (c) the provision of an appropriate community-oriented interagency information base for parents regarding available programs and services for young children, and (d) a long-term commitment to the provision of an adequate provincial funding base for quality services, programs and facilities.

We would be prepared to entertain questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Before we start the questions, for the next group that was appearing at 2:30, we did start late and we are trying to balance the time, so you will understand if we are a little delayed in getting to you.

I would ask the members of the committee to try to focus in on any of the questions they have so that we do not keep other people backed up unduly.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you, Bev, for the presentation and for

the recommendations, which I think are the type that should be easy for us to come up with a consensus on, given some of the more difficult things we have achieved a consensus on in the past. So those are helpful to us.

I want to ask you some specific questions around sort of the interaction between child care and JK-SK, if I could, because it seems to me that there is, as you point out in your paper, some irrational connections in terms of our expectations of the two systems as they are now integrated or not integrated within the school system.

I guess the first thing would be—you allude to it, although you do not go into an detail—the question of class size and the appropriateness of JK-SKs, which are at board whim in terms of size and ratio of teachers to students. The kid who is in JK may go across the hall in the afternoon and would be in an eight-to-one ratio up to the age of six, ordered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, but 12-to-one after that time if he is grade 1 even.

I just wondered if the federation has talked much at all about sort of the basic presumptions that are out there. For example, pedagogy for the schools seems to be that you can have classes as high as 30 to one, such as we have been hearing about, whereas Community and Social Services, which is supposedly providing a nurturing, secondarily educational kind of environment, has an eight-to-one ratio for the same children.

Ms Polowy: In response, those are exactly the kind of regulatory requirements we are referring to on page 10, even though we did not specify them. As you have said, Community and Social Services will mandate that a child care centre must deal with four- and five-year-olds on a one-to-eight basis, and perhaps in the afternoon that same child could go on to an afternoon kindergarten or junior kindergarten program where there might be a much larger class size.

We have no mandated Ministry of Education ratios for our kindergarten children, but I believe it is one of the areas that has attempted to be addressed, at least to begin with, by the early primary initiatives that have been taken, and then when a school board has probably seen the benefits of a lower class size in the early primary grades, it would certainly understand that the rationale is there to the same extent for kindergarten programs and junior kindergarten programs. Ruth may want to comment.

1430

Ms Baumann: I think this is an area where the reference that Bev made towards the conclusion

to the need for developmental principles to govern legislation is really important. It is not just a question of staffing ratios being very different, it is a question of a junior kindergarten child, for instance, being able to be sent home with an older sibling where the child cannot be sent home from day care with an older sibling.

One can have a discussion about which is the right thing to do or whether there are some rules that should govern that, but in fact we have one set of legislation that is operated on one set of principles around nurture and care, and other requirements which, with reference to this age group, are essentially uncoded.

I think there needs to be the development of some principles and understanding of where they can and maybe should diverge and where they should be consistent. On staffing, requirements about pickup and dropoff and requirements about meal provision, it is interesting to look at the Day Nurseries Act and see page after page of schedules about what has to be fed to kids to make sure that their nutritional requirements are met, and yet there is absolutely nothing, for instance, even in full-day kindergarten programs, to ensure that kids are being well fed. I think an examination of those discrepancies would be a good starting point.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think you are absolutely right, and I appreciate the recommendation. The other thing is, it strikes me that there are two other major factors here. One is the factor of early ID of kids with problems, and again we are placing an extra responsibility on kindergarten teachers to do that ID, and yet you are not giving them a class size that allows them to really be able to do that. That is in conflict.

The other thing is your notion that a kindergarten teacher should be the facilitator in terms of the communication. That also says that person then cannot have 30 little ones climbing around her knees while she is trying to do that job as well. I think we need to look at those two side things.

I know we do not have much time. I want to ask about training of teachers. I want to get your opinions, representing the teachers of the province, around the quality of training that is there now, given these expectations that we have through the faculties of education. I have been very frustrated—I will not speak for others—by the lack of information we can get on a consistent basis about the various programs that are offered up there, whether it is the ECE courses in the community colleges and any kind of notion from that sector about standardization there, or wheth-

er it is about the faculties of ed and the comparative kind of program there, whether it is the amount of practicum that people actually get during that one year of preparation time or whether it is the developmental theory that they get at that level.

Have you as a federation been looking at this in any way, looking at the concept of replacing this present approach with teacher education centres like we see now developing in the United States, for instance, or other kinds of models? It seems to me that before we go too much further in our expectations on kindergarten teachers, as I say, we had better take a step back and look at what our expectations in terms of the training are as well.

Ms Polowy: Margaret would like to respond to that.

Mrs Wilson: We have had informal discussions, in part with the previous deputy minister and in part with ministry officials, about this area of teacher education and about teacher education generally.

You will be aware that in terms of the study of teacher education that resulted in the teacher education council, we supported a year of training plus a year of internship. Our support of internship was partly to grapple with the question of length of practicum, because the most common model of teacher training in Ontario is not really a year, it is a university year, which is six months. The teacher who is trained for kindergarten is also trained for primary junior division, so it is quite an age spread that you are asking the individual to grapple with over a relatively short training period.

In terms of the colleges, we have been unable to get a consistent overview of the college programs ourselves. Two of us have visited the Ryerson program and we have visited the institute at the University of Toronto to look at those programs, which are excellent, but those are degree programs and it is useful to remember that. The institute is post degree and Ryerson can give a degree.

It would be a fair statement that we would support a rethinking of how we are going about delivering teacher education to people who have an extremely complex job and on whose work the rest of the system depends.

Mr Jackson: Could you talk to us about the staggered start for kids? It is a part of our mandate we want to look at. Talk to us, if you would, about the notions of when children start school in these programs, bearing in mind this is voluntary—I want to move into that part of the

question in a moment—we had hoped we would get some feedback in terms of the point at which children start. It is very narrowly defined in terms of that time and we are bringing programs on earlier. Could you comment on that?

Ms Baumann: I think the literature, as it was reviewed both by the early primary education project and any number of other places, indicates that staggered starts may be appropriate, not necessarily by birthday but certainly by looking at an individual child's readiness. I think the practicality of that question gets back at some of the issues we were trying to get at in our paper: that there are very few people in our society today who have the luxury of deciding they are going to wait until November to start their child in kindergarten if, in fact, the provisions they have to make around child care do not mesh with that.

Unless you can effectively co-ordinate that continuum of service required, both the school program and the out-of-school supports that are required, exploring those things is going to be very difficult. I think they are worth exploring, but it is going to require that kind of co-ordination.

Certainly, mandating staggered starts, say by birthday, I think would create a real hardship for some families who would suddenly have all of their arrangements thrown on edge at a time in the year when parents and kids do not expect changes.

Mr Jackson: But you would agree it would be more responsive to the individual child's needs, which clearly strikes at the whole point to which, at least, still to this day in Ontario we are focusing on the individual child's needs. That is where I am looking for comment. I know the difficulties administratively, but no one is talking about the individual child's needs.

I know Margaret wants to comment as well, but let me pose a second part of the question which is giving me rise for concern. That is, when the Premier of this province first introduced this program, he talked about children being given an opportunity so that their skill level could be advanced so that they would be more at the level with the rest of the kids in the class. I do not know the exact words, but that is what he was conveying in terms of junior kindergarten and all-day senior kindergarten.

It strikes me that if that concept is what at least his vision is for this program, then clearly we have to be talking about more individualized programs for kids who are identified, so that they can reach a certain measured level, so that when they go into grade 1 there is less of a gap. Then

that begs the question, how can we do that if it is a volunteer program, and how do we do that if everybody starts on the same day without regard for their experiences since birth and their informal or formal day care experience as it builds before they enter junior kindergarten?

That was the second part of my question. So now you get a sense of where my concern is in terms of when we start kids, the type of program and how individualized it is—which I think you talked to very clearly in your brief, incidentally. I am not confused about where you stand on that. Do you get a sense of where my concern is in this area?

1440

Mrs Wilson: I think I do, but I think you have to be careful. I think your concern is right to focus on the individual child and you cannot focus on the child's age in terms of staggered start. I think what you have to look at is some of the research that has been given to you on how this is managed in Europe, where you are really talking about nursery education systems and those systems operate with very, very small class sizes.

For want of a better word, "class" is a useful one to describe the grouping of children. The child is then identified as ready to start the more formal process or not, but it is a result of a process of socialization and observation on the part of a trained teacher who says, "This one is ready to go," rather than saying, "You were born in January; it's time to move." Unless you examine those parameters and the sorts of things Rich was talking about—you know, is the appropriate move then to a class of 30?—you are not going to change anything. Too often the staggered start is related to birth date, which does not change much, in my view, except creating real difficulties for the teacher with 30 other kids.

Mr Jackson: It does not create a difficulty if there are fewer than 30 and we could define what that number ultimately is. If it is an individualized program—

Mrs Wilson: But the age may not be the appropriate thing.

Mr Jackson: I am not arguing with you. I happen to agree that parents and teachers can determine individualized developmental milestones in children far better than politicians. I remember spending a whole afternoon in Bette Stephenson's office quite concerned about the fact that she arbitrarily rolled the time frame back and it really held back a lot of young girls, but not necessarily young boys, a year inappropriately,

based on the academic and pedagogical research that had been done to date. But it was a political decision to move it to that benchmark.

I want to go in the other direction. I am letting you know where I am coming from. It strikes me that if we have a volunteer program which speaks to the issue of helping kids increase their skill levels so that they can work better with their cohort once they are in a full-day program, it strikes me that we have to look at entry points in a different way in this province than just simply saying your birthday is the operative analysis and not necessarily your life experiences as an infant and what has been impacting on their lives, in terms of health and education and family composition and so on. That is where I am coming from, but thank you for your comments.

Mr Keyes: I wanted to touch on the teacher education side of it, as Richard did in his second question. That has been my concern, after having visited the Ryerson program just recently during the course of these hearings and looking at the curriculum, which they provided us with in great detail just today, as to how teachers can really, in the short time they have in the current system of teacher training, understand the importance and the real requirement on them to assist in that development in that very early age.

I think you have already expressed somewhat your own concerns about the readiness to sit down and talk about it, unless you have another addition you want to make in that field. It is one that I hope we will get into in this committee even yet, not at this set of hearings, but shortly.

Mrs Wilson: I agree with you this time.

Mr Keyes: We are making progress.

The Chair: Yes, we are.

Mr Callahan: I am just a visitor here, but I cannot let the opportunity go by when we have your expertise to find out if there is any information about a very important issue and one that concerns me, which is the question of literacy. We hear that eight million Canadians are illiterate, and in my community alone, Peel region, there are 40,000 people who are illiterate.

I guess my question to you concerns how it fits into education of the youth. Are there any studies that have been done, either by your federation or by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, in regard to whether or not the cause of this great problem of illiteracy has arisen from an overabundance of television for kids, as opposed to reading? If there is not, maybe that might be food for thought for somebody's investigation.

I cannot recall the numbers ever being that high. I read in the newspaper just recently where each child watches something like 21 or 22 hours of television a week. Surely, if he is watching 21 or 22 hours of television a week, some of it is probably good stuff but most of it is probably questionable, and if he is doing that, how can he be reading? If he is not reading, maybe that is the cause of much of our illiteracy problem.

Mrs Wilson: There is some research on the effect of television on thinking patterns and on attention span. The comments that are made are not flattering. There have been many comments made about the fact that people who do not read do not develop a high level of reading skills. I do not know of any longitudinal study that has been done that really makes the kind of provable correlation that you are talking about, although a very large number of people seem to have a sense that something is wrong. But there is really interesting research on the fact that extended television watching reduces the attention span, just because of the nature of the medium. I suppose that would have some effect.

The Chair: If I can just pop in for second, there are two studies by the University of California at Irvine—I forget the professor's name, but I will get it for you—and Wayne State University in Detroit, a liberal arts college, doing some similar work. Those are the two that come to mind with me personally, but I know there is other literature. That is just for your information, Mr Callahan.

Mr Callahan: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. It seems to me that the eye muscle is as much a muscle as any other muscle in our bodies. If it is not used, and I guess if the brain is not used and it becomes a passive recipient of television to the tune of 21 or 22 hours a week, that is probably going to create problems for young people.

I had the pleasure of attending at Glendale Public School in my riding for Read Canada. Frontier College put it on. They have a really unique situation with the kids. They enter into a contract with the parents, where the parents commit themselves to having the child read so many hours a day. I am sure they are not enforceable contracts, but I think what they do is direct the parents' minds to that very necessary need to have them read early on. I would hope that is what takes place and will take place in the earlier and earlier school years for these kids.

I do not know whether you would want to comment on that. Really, what I am doing here is a commercial because I think a lot of people out

there do not understand that there are eight million people in Canada who are illiterate.

Mrs Wilson: Yes, there is quite extensive research that has been done in the United Kingdom that indicates a very, very strong correlation between parents reading to their children and the child's reading skills. I do not think anyone would question the fact that this is at least as major a component in literacy as what the school does.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is another thing in terms of the crossover between the child care centres, the schools and the kindergarten, and that is to do with curriculum. Baldly stated, we have not talked much at all about the development of curricula in JK-SK, but if we are now expecting this to be a mandatory expectation, at least, of parents that their children should be in JK and SK as the government is proposing, surely then our notions of what the curriculum should be producing and the expectations for grade 1 entry, or whatever you want to look at, should now be less fuzzified than they were before.

There is also the other issue which I want to get at, and that is, if both the child care centre and the kindergarten are using creative play as their prime learning technique and the child is doing water play in the morning in kindergarten with his 30 other colleagues, and then goes in the afternoon to the day care centre and it gives that child water play again, besides the child being waterlogged—not worrying about TV destroying the mind; he is coming home with wrinkled hands and that kind of thing—surely there needs to be some sort of co-ordination between those kinds of things as well, between the child care centre and the kindergarten. I wonder if there has been any talk at all about any kind of rationalization of that kind of process within the school.

1450

Ms Baumann: I think a rationalization of some of that would be really desirable. It is really hard to achieve that when you have got kids coming to school from such a variety of out-of-school experiences. The reason we said the kindergarten teacher was the catch-point was because that teacher is the one who deals with kids who are at home with grandmothers, with neighbours, in church basements, in schools in Montessori programs. Those 30 kids are coming from all those different places. I am not sure it is possible in the present circumstances to do a very effective job of rationalizing all of those experiences.

If we are to move towards a more universally accessible child care system, it would become easier, even to the degree that if you had the kind of neighbourhood information centres we have suggested, there might be a program description and lists of contact people, so that the kindergarten teacher had a list of 5 or 10 people he or she could call to find out what had happened either the month before or the year before or over the course of a year, and to see what was planned for the future. That would help.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One would at least hope that in the child care centre in that same school there would be some sort of communication back and forth. I gather that on the whole that is not taking place because of the different governance, if I can put it that way, of the two things.

Ms Wilson: That can only operate on goodwill right now.

Ms Baumann: I think the other thing on that is constraints of time and planning and those sorts of things, and when people are available and the kind of tight staffing arrangements that both the schools and the child care centres tend to run on, that do not allow a lot of time for that consultation.

The Chair: I thank you very much for your presentation and we very much appreciate your being here.

Ms Polowy: Perhaps I could just ask one further question about the topic under consideration for your next deliberations. I know it might seem untimely to ask at this point, but as you know, since we communicated with you, we found ourselves very rushed to put together a presentation today and the research needed and we would appreciate having a better lead time.

The Chair: We are working on that. We take your comments very seriously. It was difficult. I will not go into all of the situation that started this whole thing this way, but yes, I think your time line will be much longer than what you had now.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have a plan.

The Chair: We very much appreciate, though, under those difficult circumstances, your coming forward with an excellent presentation and we thank you again.

Ms Polowy: Thank you. So your long-range plans will be in the principal's office sooner?

The Chair: At some point, yes. Being a teacher in my former life, I understand those time lines with the monthly meetings of staff.

Good afternoon, Eileen Lennon. Please introduce your copresenters and proceed. I hope you

understand there is a little bit of delay, but we are catching up. You will be given your full time.

ONTARIO ENGLISH CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Ms Lennon: I am Eileen Lennon, and I am president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. With me today on my far right is Michael Cote, who is the first vice-president, and to my immediate right is Peter DePratto who is a kindergarten teacher from Waterloo and has a master's with a lot of emphasis on early childhood primary curriculum and was one of the researchers for our brief. To my left is Dr Maria Cantalini-Williams who is a primary consultant with the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board and is also responsible for a lot of the research. In fact some of the research in here is actually her original research and you will see it quoted. So we can go to the source of the research.

The Chair: Just two notes for the committee: First, the exhibit has been numbered and fully entered. You may not have the numbered one in front of you, if you have the brief in front of you, with exhibit numbers and everything else because we just had time to do the one. It is fully recognized and everything else. Second, I understand the organization has someone who is taking pictures, just so the committee knows who all the players are. Please proceed.

Ms Lennon: As you know, we represent the 29,000 men and women who teach in the junior kindergarten to grade 12 OAC separate school system in this province. For the most part we will direct our comments to education for four- and five-year-old children and junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. We will make some comments on child care as well. Our brief is divided into five areas: educational environment, parent education, full-day senior kindergarten, teacher pre- and in-service, and care and education.

Educational environment: the environment of classrooms for early childhood education should be designed to meet the needs of young children. The space, materials and time schedules must be appropriate and flexible. In addition, the number of children in a classroom will affect the quality of the programs. Due to the flexibility necessary for early primary children, entry age policies and upgraded classrooms also require consideration.

Children learn a variety of concepts through interacting with a number of concrete materials, the complexity of which over time should ideally

increase as they progress from preschool settings, JK, SK and the primary grades.

As well, children require large, flexible time blocks to experiment with materials and to interact with their peers and significant adults. They require the freedom to experiment in large physical spaces both in- and out-of-doors.

In a position statement entitled *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children produced three statements which have to be recognized and acted upon by early childhood educators in relation to the use of time, space and materials in the classroom.

Children should have daily opportunities to use large muscles including running, jumping and balancing. Outdoor activity is planned daily so that children can develop large muscles skills, learn about outdoor environments and express themselves freely and openly.

Time schedules should be flexible and smooth, dictated more by children's needs than by adults. There should be a relatively predictable sequence to the day to help children feel secure.

A developmentally appropriate curriculum centres around child-initiated exploration and play in a context that is interesting and relevant to children.

Failure to take these factors into consideration when establishing a variety of early childhood education settings may have negative effects upon children. The research of Rosenholtz and Rosenholtz in 1981 discovered that kindergarteners' perceptions of their ability were lower in unidimensional classes when compared to kindergarteners in more multidimensional classes even though the two groups were learning the same skills.

The educational environment needs to include a reasonable pupil-teacher ratio to enable the teacher to interact with each child and to meet individual needs. A large study by Travers and Ruopp in 1979 addressed the issue of class size and found that "groups of 15 or fewer children...are associated with higher frequencies of desirable child and care giver behaviour and higher gains on achievement and IQ tests than groups of 25 or more."

Bronfenbrenner states that the number of children is more important than the number of teachers and that the size of the functional group determines small child and caretaker activities. With small groups, the children become frequently engaged and involved with activities, so it is more beneficial to have a smaller kindergar-

ten classroom with one teacher than a larger classroom with a teacher in an educational system.

Entry age into school has been debated for many years, and around the world different cutoff dates are used. Studies have shown that children who are born just before the cutoff date and who are therefore younger than their classmates were disadvantaged in school. The achievement scores and social adjustment rates were lower for younger children, especially males, as shown by Kalk in 1984 and Cantalini in 1987.

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These studies, and others, have found that the retention rates and the rates for referrals to special education classes were significantly higher for young children. Cantalini also found that the parents of young children were aware of the problems encountered by their children and that they were not satisfied with school programs and policies. Parents of older children also expressed many concerns relative to their children's older age.

The type of program offered to the children of various ages in a classroom may have an effect on the children. It is necessary, though, to recognize that children can easily perceive individual differences and that young age should not be a factor in causing children to fail, to be labelled as special education or even to feel incapable of achieving one's full potential.

More flexibility should be allowed in the entry age policy, with additional input from teachers and parents. Children should enter school at a time closest to their fourth birthday, and ideally one's birthdate should also be the first day of school for that child. To ensure continuity, flexible progression should occur in the primary grades.

Consequently, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association recommends:

1. That the Ministry of Education, when developing early childhood education and primary education documents related to classroom environments, ensure that ample emphasis is placed on the need to establish large time blocks, both in and out of classrooms, for children to explore in a variety of concrete ways.

2. That the Ministry of Education mandate that funds provided to school boards for materials to be used in preschool and primary classrooms be channelled directly to those classrooms and are not to be funnelled elsewhere.

3. That all junior and senior kindergarten classes not exceed 20 students, and that ideally 15 be the maximum number in one class.

4. That entry age to school be based on birthdates and that children enter junior kindergarten at two entry points or on a date soon after their fourth birthday.

5. That the Ministry of Education provide that a nongraded primary division be studied to allow for flexible progression and pilot projects to be set up.

Parent education: the need for effective parent-teacher collaboration and interaction is evident in today's society where the majority of parents are working outside the home and the child is subsequently spending more time with care givers other than his or her parents.

Research by Galinsky in 1987 points out that parents of young children frequently feel unsure of themselves in relation to appropriate child care practices. These parents, feeling unsure of themselves, often approach teachers concerning their child's welfare and are likely to regard negative inferences about their child as their fault.

A study conducted by Harris for the Philip Morris companies in 1988-89 revealed that 93 per cent of parents believe that women need help to provide loving care for their children yet remain productive members of the workforce. As well, the study found that 83 per cent of parents believe that men also needed this help. These figures represent a real attitudinal shift from a view in which seeking help was viewed as an admission of failure and child care outside the home was seen as potentially harmful, to the present position where parents see outside assistance as both desirable and needed.

Such findings highlight the need to facilitate effective parent-teacher interaction and to consequently enhance the child's in and out-of-home environment and experiences.

Therefore, OECTA recommends:

6. That the Ministry of Education create programs, including courses, related to effective communication with parents and outside agencies.

7. That the Ministry of Education create programs or in-service models for use by school boards and teachers related to child development and appropriate classroom and home child-rearing practices.

8. That the Ministry of Education provide funding for the establishment of in-school parent information centres related to the above.

9. That the Ministry of Education and individual school boards be responsible for the development of workshops, to be made available to parents at least 12 months before their child

enters schools, related to the following: Child development, recommended school environments and the choices available to parents regarding school entry, retention, etc.

Full-day senior kindergarten: the last speech from the throne has outlined an agenda for education over the next 10 years. In the area of senior kindergarten, the Ministry of Education has promised to provide funds for the operation of full-day programs where classroom space is available. This initiative is commendable, but if full-day kindergarten is considered as beneficial then classroom space availability should not be the only criterion for implementing such programs.

Research findings are somewhat inconclusive regarding the benefits of full-day senior kindergarten. Some studies have found positive effects while others show no difference between half- and full-day programs. The main findings which should be examined are:

Children from lower socioeconomic groups and children considered to be at risk derive more long-term positive effects in cognitive development.

Extension of the kindergarten day without appropriate programming does not automatically lead to positive outcomes.

The instructional milieu of the classroom should be one of play and active exploration.

Positive attitudes towards school should be fostered through child and parent education and staff development.

Senior kindergarten programs with a class size of 16 produced the highest achievement on standardized tests in a study done by Puelo of Chicago public schools.

Therefore, the following recommendations are suggested for consideration in the implementation of full-day senior kindergarten:

10. That full-day senior kindergarten be provided in areas where the needs of children and parents can be best accommodated.

11. That parents be fully informed of the characteristics of the program and that they are made aware of the optionality of a full-day program.

12. That parents and teachers judge each child's adjustment to a full-day program and that alternative placement possibilities be available, for example, half-day or alternate full days.

13. That programs be of high quality and that they allow ample time and opportunity for play, active exploration and social interaction.

14. That outdoor play be an important part of the program and that appropriate space and materials be provided.

15. That class size of all kindergarten programs not exceed a pupil-teacher ration of 20 to one.

16. That the school day be structured to ensure continuity and consistency for each child so that the before, after school and lunch programs may be co-ordinated with the kindergarten program.

17. That the Ministry of Education study the efficacy of full-day kindergarten programs.

Teacher pre- and in-service: over the years the Ministry of Education has failed to present a consistent continuum of policies, documents, courses and in-services related to preschool and the JK-SK years of schooling which could be utilized by teachers and care givers in a variety of settings. This situation currently exists despite research findings which have established that the education of child care staff and the arrangement of their work environment are essential determinants of the quality of services children receive and that children attending lower quality centres, and centres with more staff turnover, were less competent in language and social development.

There is a need for consistent understanding of how children learn among teachers interacting with children between the ages of zero to six.

Therefore, OECTA recommends:

18. That the Ministry of Education produce a document or policy statement similar in format to PIJ1 and the Formative Years related to programming in a variety of settings for JK-SK age children.

19. That the Ministry of Education offer additional qualification courses dealing with the early years with the part I, part II and specialist levels.

20. That the Ministry of Education encourage school boards to provide courses and documents to be complemented by in-services and resources in the area of early childhood education.

I want to change the wording of the next recommendation slightly. We were doing our last proof-reading late this morning on this document, given the time.

21. That the Ministry of Education mandate that the faculties of education provide an early childhood education option in the JK-SK range so that you could be qualified in early childhood in primary, in junior, in intermediate and senior and so on.

22. That the educational assistants receive appropriate education and be required to obtain training prior to the commencement of duty.

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23. That the grade averages of applicants for admission to the faculties of education not be

used as the primary or only criteria for admittance; that other criteria such as a demonstrated willingness to work with young children or prior work experience in a child-centred working environment also be considered as valid criteria, and that a willingness to teach in a Catholic school system be part of admittance criteria.

Care and education: The question of where care ends and education begins has been debated for many years by many groups. The reality is that children need both care and high-quality educational experiences from birth.

Traditionally, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has been responsible for the care of children, while the Ministry of Education has been concerned with formal schooling. Changes in society, such as the increased demand for child care and the heightened awareness of the importance of the early years, have caused the delineation between the two ministries to become less marked. Parents expect quality programs taught by quality professionals.

Some children attend both child care and school settings in the course of a day. These programs are often very different, with little communication between the two sets of teachers. In addition, the Day Nurseries Act only specifies physical criteria, but it does not address the same program expectations that are prevalent in school board curricula. Other discrepancies between the two groups are teacher training, working conditions, hours of operation and wages of employees. Some action needs to be taken to ensure greater continuity and co-ordination.

Most of the literature on this subject is not based on studies but on the discussions of groups of interested parties. As far back as 1979, *To Herald a Child* recommended forming one ministry to take over the area of care and education of children.

The European ministers of education in 1981 made the following statements:

"There needs to be co-ordination with the care aspects of services for young children both in terms of the link between day care and preschool and in terms of co-operation between educational and health/welfare services. The staff of nursery centres and of primary schools should be trained in such a way that consistency of the goals and continuity of the practice between the two sectors becomes a reality."

The early primary education project in 1985 addressed a need for greater collaboration and it recommended that the Ministry of Education work with other ministries and that school boards

link their services with those provided by other agencies.

An interested group of early childhood educators and primary teachers formed an association to facilitate links between the two groups. They shared information and visited each other's classrooms or centres and thereby came to know each others' programs better.

The Ministry of Education has joined with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to provide for child care programs in schools and they are to be commended for the consultation and research being conducted in this area.

In order to best co-ordinate the services and programs of child care settings and schools, the following recommendations should be considered:

24. That the education of the child be recognized as beginning at birth and that high-quality programs facilitated by qualified personnel be optional, publicly funded and available for all citizens.

25. That the teachers of these programs have qualifications from an accredited early childhood education course at a university and that the teacher assistants have at least ECE qualifications from a community college.

26. That until a program uniting care and education be established, each school be provided with a child care facility, if there is a need.

27. That when a child care facility is located in a school, school boards be encouraged to co-ordinate the two programs, thereby providing effective linkage.

The summary of our recommendations are found on the following pages, as well as a bibliography of the research for your information. We would be very happy to take any of your questions.

The Chair: There are quite a few, judging by your excellent presentation. I have four speakers who have indicated they wish to question: Mr Johnston, Mr Jackson, Mr Neumann and Ms Poole.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We were all feeling so guilty about the time line you have been given to prepare things, but working to deadline really does seem to have its positive sides too. This is very substantial.

Mr Jackson: Yes, it is really good.

Ms Lennon: We had such competent people we were able to call on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I must say you are keeping up the high quality of presentation. Our expectations are always high after your first one

on streaming was such a ground-breaker. This is as important to us, it seems to me. A lot of these recommendations deal directly with issues about which we have been hearing a little bit around the sides about but not been getting direct recommendation on, so it is very useful. I appreciate your research, obviously, that has gone into this as well.

A couple of things I would like to know: One of them is a question to you, although I presume you have not done this. If you have tried to do this, please let me know. If we were to move to 20 to one, or down to 15 to one even, in terms of the JK, I wonder what the financial implications of that are, both in terms of the numbers of teachers we would require, given the teacher shortage problem that is out there at the moment, and the space problem, which is obviously part of the government's SK policy, which you referred to as well. I presume you have not had a chance to do any kind of an estimation of that, and therefore I will turn it to the ministry instead.

Ms Lennon: No, we have not. We could not give you any kind of statistics on that, but I am sure that the ministry could.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is what I would like to find out, if we could: a couple of projections about what the effects would be both in the number of teachers needed and the dollar figures for—

Ms Lennon: But it certainly does not seem to make much sense that in grade 1 there can only be 20 in the class but in SK there can be—I think Peter said he had 27 or 28 in a class last year.

The Chair: To clarify for our note-takers here, you are looking at a specific ratio or a sliding scale of what the impact would be. You said 20 to 1, and I—

Mr R. F. Johnston: The recommendation is 20 to one maximum, and we would presume that we should get that figure, then the lower end in terms of the study about effectiveness was 15 to one, so I just wanted to see what the enormity of all that is. It might help us in terms of recommendations for phasing things in and that sort of thing, if we intend to be brave enough to do that kind of thing at the end of this process.

The other thing, of course, is you have no mandate—just because you have that many students in your class does not guarantee that you are going to get a teaching assistant or anything like that as well in some boards, I gather. That is also dependent on the boards.

Mr DePratto: Yes, that is correct. I guess an example in my situation would be last year,

where I had a morning kindergarten class of 27 children and an afternoon kindergarten class of 25 children, and within that classroom I had a child attending who has Down syndrome. A full-time aide was provided for that particular child, but again that is not guaranteed.

If you compare that situation to the situation I am in this year, in which I have a morning kindergarten classroom of 22 children and an afternoon kindergarten classroom of 18, the differences in what the children are able to achieve independently as well as the challenges that I can impart to those children in that setting because of the lower ratios, the difference is enormous.

As was mentioned by the group that was here earlier, before us, you do have children coming into kindergarten classrooms from a variety of backgrounds and from a variety of educational settings, and it is very difficult for an individual teacher to assess, as I had to do last year, 54 children from myriad backgrounds: first of all assess them, then over and above that, begin trying to program for them individually or for small groups of children. It is a very difficult task, and that task is alleviated to a large extent, in my opinion, when the ratios are dropped.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It probably also adds to the possibility of the teacher surviving longer. The very notion of 25 kids at once of that age group is more than I can possibly imagine, but what you said does maybe lead into my second question, which is your ninth recommendation in which you deal with something which no one else has dealt with at all. This is the preparation of parents for expectations within the school system, etc. This ties into the whole notion of that first assessment of a child.

We are hearing anecdotally that the protocol for this, to give them some status, which may not be warranted in some circumstances, between the boards, for how you interview kids as they come into the system is just as wide as you can imagine. One person told us that it was a 10-minute interview, which does not seem to me to give an awful lot of opportunity for identifying early problems in terms of anything from behaviour through other kinds of difficulties or anything like that.

I was wondering if you saw your recommendations around the workshops for parents, etc., as maybe a means in the year before a child comes into the system of doing that assessment in a more thorough and consistent kind of way.

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Ms Lennon: That was part of what we were getting at. In many instances, certainly with children coming to SK, there is very little interviewing done. Children are registered for school usually some time in the spring of the year. In some schools the teacher might not even be involved in that registration; it is the nurse and the secretary. Then a few months later, the child starts, and there is not much interaction before the child actually gets there. The parents do not really know what kinds of programs are available, so to have realistic expectations, it would be better if that sort of thing could take place.

Dr Cantalini-Williams: In my study, I did interview parents also of children who were of either junior kindergarten or kindergarten age, and the parents had many, many comments to make which were quite relevant regarding their assessment of readiness for their children into school.

In retrospect, they found that their own impressions of what children were able to do and their own impressions of the child's adjustment to school were founded and that that child may or may not have been adjusting well to school. They would have loved to have been able to share that kind of information with the teacher, but sometimes there was not a vehicle to be able to do that. So there are many different models for having parents and teachers meet, and I think that the more communication that takes place between those two groups the better off the children are.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It seems to me that there is some obvious prep-time implications to this and to the development of curriculum expectations, which are not that highly developed at this point in the JK certainly, and even SK. Has that come up on the bargaining table much yet? I am not really aware of what the prep time is for the JK-SK kind of things we are talking about.

If somebody is going to do a proper interview the spring before or even 10 months or so before and starts to develop a relationship with the parents, that is a very different expectation on the role of that teacher, much as the OTF was saying, in terms of becoming the key facilitator in services for that child. Has that come up at the bargaining table yet or is that a new thing?

Ms Lennon: No. In all our collective agreements that have planning time, the junior kindergarten and the senior kindergarten teachers would be included in that and would be entitled in the same way as the other teachers in the collective agreement. So that if it is a hundred

minutes, they would get a hundred minutes a week as well.

Dr Cantalini-Williams: Actually, in some boards, like our separate board in Waterloo—we only have kindergarten at the time—that teacher is allowed a certain time, either a half day or a full day depending on how many children are in the classroom, to meet with the parents in the fall and to conduct interviews. So I think it depends on the board, and maybe that is something that more boards should be aware of and should be starting because it is a good policy and the board absorbs that cost.

The Chair: There is a supplementary on that question.

Mr Jackson: There is a supplementary on that because it strikes me that teachers responsible for a child's first year in school have their ongoing requirement to liaise with the parent on an individual child basis, but they also have this requirement to do early identification and outreach. That makes them unique. The analogy would be the grade 6 teacher visiting grade 5 kids' parents in their homes to talk about what next year will be like. We now know that there is an informal discussion between the grade 5 and grade 6 teacher, but this is radically different.

It strikes me that there is an area that we should be looking at in a little more detail. I know it threatens some people because it gets into collective bargaining matters, but it should not if that is part of the process. We cannot be doing justice to either if there is not a distinction in terms of the time as well as the the skills necessary to go out and do that.

Ms Lennon: In many of the school boards that presently have a junior kindergarten program, part of the program in the beginning is a home visit program. In Dufferin-Peel, where I come from and where I taught JK, we had a staggered enrolment for the students in the fall and before each student started, I visited that child at home. That was really a great way of easing the child's adjustment to school and gave an excellent opportunity to dialogue. In any junior kindergarten program there should be some—how you set that up and how you do it, there are a variety of ways—but a home visit or some sort of a parent interview, whether it takes place in the home or the school, is certainly really beneficial.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can I get a copy from the board of that protocol? They must have down in writing some place how that works.

Ms Lennon: I think so. I think they all do it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: See if you can chase it down.

The final thing—I thought when you were going to change one of your recommendations, it might have been 23.

Ms Lennon: Is that the—

Mr R. F. Johnston: It was in terms of the willingness to teach in a Catholic system as part of the admittance criteria. I presume, however, that the verb "consider" that is in the line above that would apply to this one, that it should be for consideration.

Ms Lennon: Yes, and willingness.

I noticed quite a buzz around the room when I read that one and I think I should, in fairness, explain a little bit of what we meant there. We feel that the separate school system has very distinct needs as a separate school system and that in much the same way that faculties consider the number of people, that is, the demand and the requirement for science teachers or math teachers or French-as-a-second-language teachers, one of the other things they should consider is the needs of the separate school system in the same way that they would consider the needs of the French-language school system.

But we certainly understand that there are other rules that govern, like the Human Rights Code and so on. I guess we are just getting an extra little point in there. It is not really particularly on early childhood but is a source of concern for the separate school community.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I see it actually, with the verb "consider" being in there, a fairly progressive move and one that is of a kind quite different from the sort of "Let's get rid of 136LA group within the Catholic community." This seems to me to be a very positive affirmation of the role of the human rights legislation in that kind of thing, in opposition to the absolute right to hire only Catholics. This notion that you are putting forward, and OECTA has been consistent on this—I am not going to take you on in that sense—but this notion that it is the willingness to recognize the mission and to work within that that I think is key. I have always been very happy that OECTA has taken that kind of line.

Mr Jackson: Twenty-seven recommendations are always appreciated when you are in your second week of hearings. We have really identified a lot of problem areas, so I appreciate very much that you have been so specific and so helpful in the area of recommendations. Obviously, recommendation 4 strikes at a concern that I have for Amy and Lauren Jackson who are born

in January and March and they are young girls. Being aware of all the pedagogical research which you cited, I have a lot of concerns about their late entry into school. Could you clarify a little more clearly about the dual entry times and point to specific jurisdictions where you may have heard of them working effectively?

Ms Lennon: Maria did her study on this one and I am going to ask her to speak to this.

Mr Jackson: Could I get a copy of it? My wife and I would love to read it.

Ms Lennon: She has a 3 January baby.

1530

Dr Cantalini-Williams: That happened after the fact, but anyway. After I finished my thesis, I got married and that is why you see the Williams after the Cantalini. Then I found out that I was expecting and I asked the doctor, "When am I due?" He said, "Some time between 31 December and 1 January" and I said, "Do you know the difference it makes in a child's life whether that child is born the day before or the day after?"

This study and this issue is full of many variables and many factors are involved. There are different countries around the world that use different criteria to enter children and one way of entering children is the way New Zealand does it: on your fifth birthday you enter school and it is a cause for celebration.

British Columbia is now looking at a dual entry system where it would like the child in that particular province to be five before he enters school. Here it would be four with junior kindergarten being mandated. The child who is born between October and April enters in January and the child born between April and October enters in September, so there are two entry points. In that way the difference between children within a grade would only be six months at the most and not 12 as it is now.

In my research I have found that children who were born just before the cutoff date, especially boys, were at a great disadvantage. I know some controversy does exist because you can talk about the program being ready for the child or the child being ready for the program. But in some boards or in some places where program is not geared towards meeting individual needs of children—that could happen, I suppose.

We do try to do that, but children who are younger often suffer many detrimental effects from being young and one is that I found in my study that boys who were born in December were retained at a rate of 42 per cent, so by grade 6, 42 per cent of those children had failed a grade. This

was only in the last 10 years. Girls were retained at a rate of 27 per cent. The special education classes had it that 25 per cent of the children were born in December. The children who were retained in another set of studies, again, 25 per cent.

That and teacher ratings and parent concerns all reiterated the same fact, that children who were born just before the cutoff date were at a disadvantage.

Again, I understand that meeting the needs of the individual child is very important, but somehow that gets lost. Maybe a study could be repeated in another school system but the results I found are not new. There are many other studies that have found the same kind of percentages, both in Alberta and in the United States.

The range is 40 per cent to 45 per cent retention rate rather than 42, which is what I found. Parents of children who were born in January are just as concerned. They are very worried that their children will be understimulated, under-challenged, etc.

I think we have to give teachers a lot of credit but the statistics are there. I feel that more studies should be done on it and that possibly a dual entry date system would work.

In the Education Act as it stands, and I studied it quite carefully and I hope I interpreted it correctly, there is a provision for a beginner class so if a school board would like it could start a beginner class where children born between January and July could start in January. There is also another statement which does acknowledge that young children are at a disadvantage by saying that you have to be in school when you are six, but if you are born between September and December you do not have to be in school until the following September, when you already are six years old.

I think if we look at the Education Act carefully, there are different provisions for the age differences. As the speakers before us said, there is more than just age to be looked at, which is true, and that is why I think parents and teachers collaborate in deciding how a child progresses.

Mr Jackson: I could not agree with you more.

One of your first comments was to reference the notion that full-day junior kindergarten would be done on the basis of space availability. Space availability is a political issue in this province. It is based on how much money you can raise. If you are in a high-growth area, where there are a lot of lot levies now, it may be that if there are a lot of lot levy moneys, maybe we will

get some schools and maybe those will be in junior and senior kindergarten classes.

I thank you for your recommendation there. It was a theme that ran through your campaign—through your—

The Chair: Freudian slip.

Mr Keyes: Freudian slip.

Mr Jackson: They are all campaigns. Listen, when you have your hand out in front of the government, they are all campaigns.

One of the themes that was not really tied together in an overall recommendation is this notion that we have a program that, again, is being mandated by Queen's Park which will have implications in a variety of areas, not just space: in-service training, availability of teachers, and the very need that school boards have to go out and hire additional consultants in order that they can pull together these programs properly. There is no recognition in the funding, the fact that this is general funding for the elementary panel as opposed to a specific funding model for this initiative.

I very much, as all people in education do, support differentiated pupil-teacher ratios in early primary division. I am very pleased that Peterson brought that in, but it is not being funded to the extent that it reinforces that school boards can provide that.

I wonder if you would speak in specific terms about the need. I know the trustees are up later this afternoon, and I am sure they will. But certainly teachers experience more at first hand the pressures. It is like squeezing a balloon. If you take in the pressures, the current program is junior kindergarten and expectations are raised there; the moneys have to be taken from other program areas and the system in a way gets hurt by these wonderful new initiatives.

Could you talk to us a bit more about that for the record, because it is an area which I think ties together a lot of your recommendations? If there are provincially mandated levels for staffing, then there should be provincially mandated funding that is specifically tied to those levels and so on.

Ms Lennon: I think when we appeared before you the last time, we talked about the whole area of financing and certainly made the point, along with a lot of other people, that the provincial share of the financing of education is not high enough. We were very happy to see that this committee recognized that in its recommendations to the government.

Certainly, in all of these programs, if the government is going to mandate them, it has to

put the adequate dollars there because we know that the people who will be on the front lines, from our perspective, are the teachers, as well as the students. In all the research we have done, particularly that Maria and Peter did, what was very important is not just that the kids are there are school; it is the program that is going to be provided for them. That is very clear in all the research on full-day senior kindergarten as opposed to half-day senior kindergarten.

Just having the kids come for a full day is not necessarily going to mean that the child learns any more, that the outcomes are going to be more positive. It very much has to do with, what kind of a program is that child going to be presented with when he is there? You cannot just mandate the program and then go away and not put in the other supports that are necessary, such as proper staffing and curriculum development.

The ministry provides curriculum guidelines for all other areas of the school system, and to my knowledge it has not updated the ones, at kindergarten or at junior kindergarten. I do not if there are even—there is a not very much at the junior kindergarten level, but they certainly have not been updated at that early years level for quite a long time.

That is very important to us and it is also why we talked about, in the teacher in-service and pre-service, the need for people to be able to concentrate on those early years when they are training. It seems to me that in the old teachers' college system, they used to have something called the primary specialists course, which I took when I went to teachers' college and which really did put emphasis on JK-SK.

Now, when it is just primary, a lot more of the emphasis is put on grades 1, 2 and 3. Student teachers can go through their whole—they can come out having primary stamped on their Ontario teacher's certificate but they may have spent very little class time on JK or SK and they may never have done any practice teaching in a JK-SK. Their assignment could be a junior kindergarten or a senior kindergarten.

We think they should be able to have that. They should be able to do concentrated work. It is a distinct part of the school system. As well as that, in terms of additional courses, you should be able to get your part I, your part II and your specialist in the early years, which hone in on those very important years. The kind of attitudes that are formed by kids then really carry them for a long time, and if they get off to a bad start it is hard to get them back on track. If they get off to a great start and the road gets a little bit bumpy,

they can probably handle it. I think most kindergarten and junior kindergarten teachers are really very conscious of that, that they are really forming an impression that will last for a long time.

1540

Mr Neumann: I was very pleased that your presentation included some references to the role of parents and that you have given some thought to the role of parents. There are a lot of questions I would like to ask, but I will focus in on the children with special needs and early identification of special needs. What role do you see for parents in assisting in the identification process? Second, I noticed you mentioned parent information centres. Do you think those centres could be used to provide advice and assistance to parents of children with special needs, in helping them work through the identification process and the placement decisions that are often very tough?

Mr DePratto: In response to your second question, in my own experience I found that there is a great lack of communication between teachers and parents, in particular kindergarten teachers and parents. In my situation, very little time is offered for me to communicate effectively with parents.

I have the opportunity, if I wish, to provide in-service for parents related to the curriculum I am imparting to their children, in relation to early identification procedures that our board and other boards are using. Again, the amount of time I actually have to do this is limited and as well there is no mandate. There is nothing out that says I have to do this, that I have to in-service parents. There are no vehicles available for me that would help train me or other teachers to provide certain in-services to answer parents' questions.

Year after year, you have parents phoning schools or coming into the schools and asking: "How do I get my child ready for kindergarten? What is going to be taught in kindergarten? Can you outline the kindergarten curriculum? What is your early identification procedure?" There is a wide variety of questions that are thrown your way that you have to attempt to field. In many instances, unless you have the background education and the background training in those areas, it is very difficult for some teachers to communicate effectively to parents, not just in the area of what is available to their children once they enter the school, but more important: "What do you have to offer as a parent? What do you bring to this situation that would be beneficial, in

the long run, to your child and to me as I work with your child?"

Those vehicles, in my opinion, are limited at the present time. I feel that if in-service training were available for teachers within individual boards, that problem could be alleviated to a large extent, if there were an in-service format established by the ministry or by the government to help enhance the communication between the classroom teacher and the parents, especially as it applied to early identification procedures, which you mentioned earlier. I may use a specific format for evaluating a child who enters my classroom without having any knowledge whatsoever as to what was involved in that particular child's life, especially a special needs child's life, prior to entering my classroom.

There are a lot of variables involved here that I may not have been exposed to and I am making a decision without really entertaining or being given a forum to entertain the needs of the parents as well, and the information they are going to bring to the school that is going to help us collaborate to provide an effective program for that individual child.

Mr Neumann: Are you getting the information you need from community agencies such as public health and children's aid societies and other agencies that have perhaps had previous contact with the kids in day care centres?

Mr DePratto: Not always; no.

Dr Cantalini-Williams: I was going to address that point. Especially when you are dealing with special needs children, the case becomes that there have been prior assessments done on those children, by the health unit or doctors or specialists etc. They have been looking at this child much sooner than the classroom teacher has. If those particular assessments would be made known to the teacher and if the teacher were able to talk to those people and agencies, then I think you find out more about the child and you would be able to co-ordinate programs.

Often—not to a great extent—you do have it, but it is sort of on the side. It is something you have to fit into your regular day. I think what happens is that the physiotherapist might come in or some speech teacher might come in from another centre. You are trying to co-ordinate your program with those other specialists, but sometimes, as Peter said, the vehicle is not there for the teacher to be able to make that kind of communication and to fill the gaps. With special needs children, they really need that much more assistance or attention.

Ms Lennon: You have to sometimes ferret it out. You really have to work at finding the information. It is not always readily available and accessible. It varies a lot from situation to situation.

Mr Neumann: I think that has been most helpful. We had some discussion on it on previous days ago, but you have provided the perspective.

Ms Lennon: The whole idea of a parents' centre where they could also get information, where they could get help on their own for their child. Maybe they have a Down syndrome child or maybe they have a child who the parents feel has some sort of special needs. They could come to the school before the child gets there and get some information.

Mr DePratto: I think if you establish such a centre within a school or a group of schools or a family of schools, for example, there could be a library available with information for parents to avail themselves of that is related to child development, current curriculums in the school and so on. They would have that background information that they could use in their decision regarding placement of their child within a school.

Mr Neumann: Thank you very much. I could go on at length but I know the chairman would not let me.

The Chair: It is not that I would not let you. We do have one more questioner and we are trying to do it in the interests of time with other delegations as well.

Ms Poole: I will try to be brief. I would like to go back to some comments you made in your brief about trying to establish continuity and co-ordination between the various ministries—to be specific, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education—concerning a child's programming, training and so on. You floated out an idea that is not a new one, as you pointed out in your brief, that of having a Ministry of the Child.

At first blush this is a very seductive idea. Really, if we consider the children to be our future and our most important resource, would we not focus our resources, our money and our thoughts on the child? But on second thought I started thinking about some of the ramifications. For instance, right now we have secondary schools under the Ministry of Education. Do you put an 18-year-old student in the Ministry of the Child? Anyway, those are some of the logistical things I thought about.

What I would like your comment on—and in your recommendations you stop short of this—is whether you see a Ministry of the Child or for the child to be a feasible option or whether you think there are just too many structural barriers in the way.

1550

Ms Lennon: I think we went through some of the things you went through, and we did deliberately stop short of making that recommendation, although we bounced it around and probably did not come right out and recommend it simply because it would create another whole bureaucracy and we just were not sure about where it would go and we did not have enough time to research what all the ramifications were.

The idea of the Ministry of the Child goes back to the study that we were part of commissioning, *To Herald the Child*, which was 10 or 11 years ago, in 1979. I think I would like to be very clear, though, to say that we are not outrightly opposed to a Ministry of the Child and that we would certainly love to co-operate or would love to see further investigation of such a ministry.

I believe in *To Herald the Child* they talked about the cutoff being like 12. There are lots of details. If it was just going to create some other kind of bureaucracy that everybody had to contend with but did not create any real change for kids, then I think we would have problems with it. It seems to me the OTF presentation had something to say about it, and probably some other people who have presented to you have also mentioned it or alluded to it, so it might be something whose time has come for some more investigation and your committee might be the very vehicle to start that. I think we deliberately stopped short because we were not sure whether we were going to create something that would be more of a problem and not really do any real good.

Ms Poole: And if we stopped it at 12, then we would have the linkage and co-ordination problem on the other end of it. We then have to have a Ministry of the Child and a Ministry of Youth and an umbrella to cover both of them.

The Chair: I very much commend the committee for its forbearance. Time constraint of all the people and getting time equally here is a very large concern of me as Chair. I want to thank the delegation for a very excellent, thought-provoking presentation to us. I am sure a number of discussions will be around some of the recommendations you have come up with.

Ms Lennon: As always, if you want further access or you want to search out any of the

articles, we would be happy to help you do that and provide any other help. Thank you once again. We would echo the comments of the last group about the time lines. We will be equally as subtle as they were.

The Chair: You will be consulted, and we take again your comments; no problem. It was a difficult exercise for us as well.

I call now on the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Ruth Lafarga, president. Before we start, I understand you have changed some people on your delegation.

Mrs Lafarga: Yes, we have.

The Chair: I note that Ms Nelson is with you in some official capacity and is appearing later. I am wondering if we could work that out, because we do have people on the time line. I was trying to explore if there were enough similarities in the two presentations you would be making that we could work something out, since we have other people on the waiting list. However, I will leave that up to you and we can work that out at some point.

Ms Nelson: I am very much restrained by being part of an official delegation today.

The Chair: That puts it into perspective, and I thank you for those comments. Mrs Lafarga, please introduce your delegation and proceed. We apologize again for the late start.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Lafarga: I would like to introduce Marie Peers, director of policy with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, and the restrained Fiona Nelson—

The Chair: You are a miracle worker, indeed.

Mrs Lafarga: —who is here to give us some moral support because Carol Parker could not come down from Carleton today.

Normally we would have been very pleased to make a presentation. Unfortunately, we have fairly inadequate time lines that were allowed to us to get a position from our 92 member boards, so basically what we would like to do is to spend the time summarizing some of the recent ministry initiatives and positions that have been taken, because we do feel this issue has had very extensive study and a number of reports.

We have presented two documents to you today; one which outlines some of our concerns and a more extensive paper which is the Ontario Public School Boards' Association position on child care.

We also want to raise a number of questions and concerns that we have. We are really concerned about what can really be accomplished from these hearings when a number of major decisions have already been announced on junior kindergarten, the implementation of full-day senior kindergarten where space is available, implementation of changes for the formative years, and we are already having to implement day care in our new schools.

While we are looking at the formative years and those particular areas, we have been told that while we can be consulted on them, the decision as to whether the government moves ahead on them is certainly not debatable; in fact, the ministry has been restructured to implement these changes, and that is where we are reacting.

We wanted to talk about the past study in the early primary education report of 1985, which did have very extensive consultation, with 42 recommendations covering most of the areas that we would want to address: curriculum, teachers' certification, and co-operation with other community services. Included in those recommendations was an implementation plan which included pilot studies and we were given one year to respond to that particular initiative and, in fact, did respond but there has been no response from the government on that early primary education report of 1985.

We would certainly draw your attention to that particular report and feel that it should be studied in writing any report now. Again, our submission in 1989 is appended on the child care issue.

In our presentation today, we have dealt with a number of issues and I just would like to raise them. I am sure you are hearing these concerns from a number of people. The capital needs of school boards are very considerable in any of these initiatives. Many school boards are already faced with problems of capital needs for the regular school program and extending JK and going into child care puts up an added problem for those particular boards.

It not only has a problem of the capital associated with it but what many school boards find is that they have to now start buying larger sites as a result of this, particularly with the initiative of child care. We need to put those children inside the hard core space of the school and we need playgrounds, we need additional parking spaces for parents coming to meet or drop off children, and this has meant that school boards do in fact have to be looking at larger school sites.

We are looking also at the issue that many of the children who would regularly be in the school building will have to be put in portable classrooms outside, and that is causing some tension within various communities.

We raise the issue of what should be the teacher qualifications in these programs. Will we in fact be looking for Ontario qualified teachers or will we be able to use early childhood education graduates in this particular area? If we are looking at fully qualified teachers, what about the teacher supply, which is certainly at a very critical level for a number of our boards right now in attracting people to work in their systems? They already are employing people on letters of permission and this will only get more critical.

Will the class sizes be mandated by the government, as we have seen in grades 1 and 2? If this is the case, what will that do with teacher-board negotiations? If we see these programs mandated, what happens to the programs in grades 1, 2 and 3, because if we have mandated JK and we have full-day SK, that is going to have an impact on the programs all the way through the early years? Not only will that need rewrites of all that curriculum, but it has fairly major cost impacts in terms of the preparation of the curriculum, the implementation of the curriculum and the development of staff.

1600

If we move to "where space permits" with senior kindergarten, who should be allowed if there is not enough space for all the children who want to enrol? Should it be the children in that particular area or should we have a program that would mean taking children at risk in the jurisdiction of the board? This is a question that really does have to be addressed. Is it simply the children who could come to that school?

I have already mentioned the costs of developing the curriculum and the whole area there. Obviously, there are a number of questions associated with the governance of this particular area because school boards do not have authority, as far as the program is concerned, in the child care facilities. What is the role of boards? That certainly does need clarifying, and that has been a consistent position of our association in getting that clarified.

We have responsibility to have it in our buildings. Our principals have to be on the child care board. Obviously, being associated with the school board, the parents feel that we have

control over the program but the program is run by the day care operator.

We ask, too, about the space between ECE, the day care facilities and the JK in schools and compatibility in those particular regulations.

We now have child care for the school-age children. What about the programs before and after school?

I think we could keep on going with the transportation costs which we do not get grant money on. School boards do not get transportation costs for transporting children, and we need some clarification about that. Is it just home-to-school transportation or can we then take the children to day care situations if they are in JK and senior kindergartens?

There is the whole area of qualifications, which I have touched on, and in-service programs. I do not want to go over those because you have them there. We have some real concerns and we are certainly prepared to co-operate, and I think our position paper outlines in further detail some of the concerns that we have.

We would rather address questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think we have been properly chastised by virtually everybody who has come before us again today about the time lines people have had, and I regret that, given the importance of this particular issue and the phenomenon that you mentioned at the beginning that there is already a lot of initiative out there by government but not as much consultation as the players would like, and here we are jumping in and it is a little unclear for people in terms of what our role is. That is our continuous problem on the committee but we launch into these things anyway.

We have been getting a lot of very useful commentary, however, and a lot of it concerns questions you must deal with in the fashion you have raised them. I want to raise a couple about what you have said in terms of clarification.

Right now, you are raising a question about "where space permits" in the senior kindergarten and how to make the choices for the potentially disadvantaged or disadvantaged child, the at-risk child or the neighbourhood child, etc. What happens now in the boards which are operating these programs? They are probably doing it primarily where space permits as well, I would presume, in a lot of areas. How do they make the determinations now? Are there any requirements on them or any guidelines from the ministry about how they should be looking at this? Is it early prevention or as a community service? Is there anything like that extant?

Mrs Lafarga: I will let Fiona answer. I am not aware of boards that are offering full-day SK apart from Toronto. That would be local board autonomy on how they decide on that, so I would rather that she addressed it.

Ms Nelson: In Toronto, we have had all-day kindergartens in certain schools for some time. They are in what we call our class-1 inner-city schools, which are the schools of greatest need. The space has been made available for them because we have felt the program was so important and have, in fact, done research which corroborates the value of the program.

One of the main reasons for the program is not to give the children a double dose of salts every day; it is in fact to bring order to a larger period of their day, because one of the things that many of these children is lacking is real order and continuity in their lives. So there is a great deal of effort being made to develop a program that in fact provides order and tranquillity and security that is part of the program.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is it my understanding that the only full-day SK is in Toronto? Is that what you are saying?

Mrs Lafarga: No. I believe Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry did have it but stopped it. They got out of it just recently because of the cost of providing it. I am not aware of other boards that do it already. We think if boards had moved to it they would have moved to it because they do have the space already available; but we will say this, when boards move to an optional in anything like that, it can create problems because, as you are well aware, parents who cannot get their children in really object to it.

I would also say I am a product of full-day SK or what we called SK in Australia, because that is what you start school with. You just go automatically a full day.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What do you think the impact is going to be of the suggestion of moving to full-day SK and developing that expectation in the parents at least if in fact the cost realities for the boards are such that they are already not choosing it for those reasons and there is no capital money going to be proffered?

Or, as we have heard reaffirmed again before committee, do you think boards are going to move on this or do you think they are going to basically try sort of a counter propaganda, if I can put it that way, in terms of the cost of doing this versus other kinds of things they have to look at, whether it is child care in the school or other kinds of things?

Mrs Lafarga: My observation is that the boards that do not have JK now, by and large have not moved to it because of the space requirement. Certainly, boards that do not have it have been pressured very extensively and they have not been able to because they cannot provide the space.

Obviously, that will be a very major factor in the decision on SK and that is a very big reality for many boards. The days of declining enrolment have passed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want to ask you a question which may be a tough political question for you because it does raise, as you rightfully said, the question of board autonomy versus ministry fiat, and that concerns the grades 1 and 2 mandated class size which is now a fait accompli and which we have heard of many responses from courts in terms of how they have dealt with that.

It does seem illogical to have grades 1 and 2 separated out from the rest of the division for this requirement and nothing before it and grade 3 immediately after it not being included. What is the position of the association in terms of whether the junior kindergartens and senior kindergartens should stay totally up to the board at the same time as we have mandated grades 1 and 2 aiming for 20 to one, eventually? Have you taken a position on that at this stage?

Mrs Lafarga: As to whether they should decide on the class size?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, just in the sense that you have mandated grades 1 and 2 and yet we know of a range in the various boards of about an 18-to-one ratio in some boards to what we are hearing just today again, 25, 26, 28 to one in some cases. It just seems irrational from both sides.

Mrs Lafarga: Our position on that is local board autonomy because it is part of negotiations; your pupil-teacher ratio or class size, whatever you are negotiating, is very key.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess my difficulty is that where there has been intrusion in part of the division already, it begs a lot of questions about the integrity of the division. If you can mandate it and still have your negotiations around grades 1 and 2, why not add JK, especially when that is what we have all been talking about, the importance of the transitions points and early identification and all those kinds of things? When boards are going to be caught on bucks because of maybe the grades 1 and 2 mandate and they have had to increase their sizes in some of the

other grades, it seems kind of counterproductive, a fallout from having grades 1 and 2 mandated.

Mrs Lafarga: We have raised that issue. We have the guidelines under the Ministry of Community and Social Services for day cares now, and then suddenly you move them into a school building and you have a totally different ratio. We have asked for some rationalization of that. We have really posed that as a real problem.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That has all sorts of effects, of course, on the funding that you are transferred. We have been raising that a lot and it does not make sense.

On the transportation thing, I was a little surprised by the comments about transportation. It shows how little you know about some of these things. My son, for instance, is transported back to his day care after his half-day JK. I was wondering, is this just because of the goodwill of that particular board? Are they paying the entire cost?

Mrs Lafarga: That is again I think local boards. Some boards will say, "Only home to school"; other boards will say, "Day care to school." Some of course the children are dropped off in the day care in the morning, the day care transports them to the school, the school then transports them back to the day care. There are all sorts of arrangements.

Unfortunately, one of the problems that you find is that there are often switches made, particularly if it is private day care. The switch is made and you may get them dropped off at a number of different points, so this can create all sorts of problems in terms of running the program.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I had my son dropped off on a day the school was operating and the day care was not, I guess, which is fairly traumatic for a little five-year-old.

Mrs Lafarga: I think one of the other issues we need to raise, which that brings up, is the whole issue of whether the child care centres in the schools are open year-round and the transportation under those situations. These are other issues that have not really been addressed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I appreciate the thoughtfulness of the questions that you raised. I must say we seem to be—oh, there was one other, I am sorry, that is around teacher training. You asked some questions but the more I am seeing, the more I am having to say that the teacher training is not adequate to deal with the kind of challenges that are there for kindergarten.

We just heard again in the last presentation that you can actually go through that year at the faculty and have never actually had a practicum in a kindergarten, yet then be hired by a board because that is where the need is and be expected to deal with that appropriately, again perhaps with a very large class size that you have not had the experience in, etc. It just seems to me that there are some real problems that we need to address in terms of teacher training.

Mrs Lafarga: In another incarnation, I was the poor sinner, was a teacher and we had the three-year specialist certificate. I think that one of the issues today, though, too is that for promotion in many boards you have to have experience in a number of different panels, so you do get mobility between the particular areas in a school and, even if you had a specialist certificate, you may not only teach in that particular area. Fiona, of course, has a lot more experience in the teacher education area.

Ms Nelson: My training actually was in training day care workers, but I have been trained as a kindergarten teacher so I can see the differences in the two kinds of training. I think it would be very helpful if the select committee did address the discrepancies between the requirements for day care workers and primary teachers, because there are different stresses in the training. There are certainly different requirements in the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act.

There are a whole lot of things that are going to have to be reconciled. We have at the moment problems where it is perfectly legal for a junior kindergarten to be in a place where it is illegal for a day care to be in. It is the same child at a different hour of the day which points up the problem.

I think it would be very helpful if we actually did some rethinking of what is involved in dealing with very young children. You can at the faculty take the early childhood option in which case you would get a practicum in a day care, but if you had not done that and then were plunked into one, it would be a bit of a shock.

Mrs Lafarga: I think too we need to look at the impact of pay equity irrespective of what your training is.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Especially with the latest decision that has been made.

The Vice-Chair: Any other questions? Seeing none, I would like to thank you and the association for your presentation this afternoon.

Our next group is not here. Apparently they went downstairs for coffee, so I will recess for five minutes.

The committee recessed at 1613.

1621

The Chair: I will call this meeting to order. We have before us le Réseau ontarien des services de garde francophones; bienvenue au Comité spécial de l'éducation. I believe you do not have a written brief, Mr Brihmi.

RÉSEAU ONTARIEN DES SERVICES DE GARDE FRANCOPHONES

M. Brihmi : J'aimerais bien vous remercier de nous avoir accordé cette occasion pour faire notre présentation. Malheureusement, la personne qui était supposée venir avec le document écrit — on l'attend. Probablement à cause du mauvais temps, elle n'est pas encore arrivée, ce qui fait que notre document écrit suivra.

The Chair: Okay, then, please proceed.

M. Brihmi : Comme je l'ai dit, nous vous remercions de nous avoir accordé ce temps-là pour faire notre présentation, oralement pour le moment.

En effet, nous étions un petit peu surpris de ne pas avoir été invités d'office pour faire notre présentation, étant donné que la communauté franco-ontarienne a toujours eu à cœur la question de l'éducation et que nous avons aussi fait des présentations devant ce comité au mois de septembre à Ottawa. Nous étions, en effet, surpris de ne pas avoir été invités à faire des présentations devant votre comité.

J'aimerais bien, avant que je ne cède la parole à Nicole Germain, la présidente des services de garde, faire quelques remarques concernant notre participation. Nous avons fait des présentations devant ce comité lors de ses audiences sur le financement à Ottawa mais, malheureusement, nous étions pas mal surpris qu'aucune de nos recommandations ne soit prise en considération lors de la présentation, lorsque vous avez rendu public le document final sur le financement scolaire.

Nous pensions qu'il y avait un certain consensus au sein de la communauté franco-ontarienne, par rapport au financement dans les écoles catholiques et publiques, mais que ce comité allait prendre en considération ce consensus et répondre aux besoins légitimes de cette communauté en prenant en considération les jugements précédents et la Charte des droits et libertés, article 23. Malheureusement, il n'y a rien de cela qui est sorti dans votre document.

Nous espérons que, dans l'avenir, nous aurons l'occasion de faire des contributions et des présentations et de faire l'effort aussi de cette présentation, mais nous espérons aussi que vous allez prendre en considération nos efforts parce que ce sont des efforts légitimes qui concernent nos besoins et qui sont des besoins légitimes.

Nous croyons au système démocratique et à l'échange, et nous croyons aussi que c'est le devoir des députés de prendre en considération les besoins de leur communauté.

Mme Germain : Je suis Nicole Germain, présidente du Réseau ontarien des services de garde francophones. Alors, en mon nom et au nom du Réseau, je désire remercier les membres du comité de nous donner l'occasion de nous exprimer sur un sujet qui nous tient beaucoup au cœur : l'éducation de la petite enfance. Le Réseau est composé d'une trentaine de membres actifs qui sont des services de garde francophones dans toutes les régions de l'Ontario; toutes les régions sont couvertes.

Je voudrais vous dresser un bref historique du Réseau. En juin 1988, un groupe de francophones intéressés à l'avancement et au développement des services de garde à l'enfance, représentant les quatre régions de l'Ontario formait, avec l'aide de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, le Réseau ontarien des services de garde francophones.

Nous entendons par « service de garde d'enfants de langue française », tel que défini dans la constitution du réseau, des services qui sont gérés par des francophones; le recrutement vise les francophones; les programmes sont offerts en français à des enfants de langue française dont la langue maternelle est le français ou des enfants qui parlent français; la langue de communication dans le service de garde est le français.

Le réseau regroupe des services de langue française, appuie et encourage le développement de nouveaux services, communique les besoins de la communauté francophone et élabore des recommandations aux différents paliers gouvernementaux. À l'heure actuelle, le réseau a 32 membres représentant les services de garde juridiquement constitués ou en voie de le devenir, des individus et des groupes francophones oeuvrant de près ou de loin dans les services de garde d'enfants.

Nous vivons, depuis la fin des années soixante, des changements sociaux majeurs au niveau familial : 59 pour cent des femmes sur le marché du travail ont des enfants d'âge préscolaire. La modification des familles a aussi amené un changement d'attitude de la part de la société en

général. On reconnaît la nécessité et l'importance de bons services de garde pour le développement des petits, tant au point de vue social qu'au point de vue intellectuel.

Interjections.

Mme Germain : La population franco-ontarienne n'est pas en marge de ces changements ; elle vit les mêmes préoccupations. Par contre, elle est beaucoup moins bien outillée que la population anglophone pour y faire face.

La plupart des services de garde qui existent présentement répondent aux besoins des femmes qui travaillent à l'extérieur du foyer. Le fait que le service soit offert en français s'avère d'une grande importance pour les parents francophones qui y inscrivent leurs enfants car, pour eux, la garderie contribue au prolongement du milieu familial.

L'impact positif de la garderie française sur la langue parlée par les enfants est reconnu. Les enfants qui ont fréquenté la garderie sont plus ouverts et s'expriment plus facilement en français. Le Réseau est convaincu que les centres de service de garde, en tant que milieu linguistique et culturel, jouent un rôle primordial pour le développement de l'identité francophone aussi bien que pour le développement social, affectif et intellectuel du jeune enfant.

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Le service de garde de langue française est, sans contredit, le lieu privilégié pour les petits de zéro à cinq ans après le milieu familial, et en est le prolongement le plus logique, le plus normal, celui que les parents choisissent.

Le service de garde dans les écoles : pour plusieurs raisons le réseau croit que l'école de langue française est l'idéal comme emplacement pour un service de garde. Le milieu linguistique et culturel est propice aux jeunes qui apprennent à parler, à se connaître et à s'identifier en groupe. La transition entre la garderie et l'école se fait en douceur. Le déroulement de la journée est simplifié pour l'enfant qui fait des demi-journées dans une garderie, qui va à l'école et revient à la garderie. L'enfant s'exprime déjà en français au moment où il est admis à la maternelle ou au jardin. Il connaît les lieux et son environnement. Malgré ce que nous venons de dire, le Réseau continue de croire que, si le service de garde, peut importe où il se situe, offre un programme de qualité complètement en français, le résultat sera le même.

Le ministère de l'Éducation a adopté en 1988 un règlement qui fournissait des fonds d'immobilisation aux conseils scolaires, permettant la construction d'une garderie dans un tout nouvel

édifice scolaire. Pour les raisons mentionnées plus haut, le réseau voyait d'un très bon oeil cette initiative. Toutefois, nous nous sommes vite rendus compte que ce règlement comportait bien des lacunes ; en effet, en ce moment il y a peu de construction d'écoles de langue française en province et le règlement ne touche pas les écoles déjà existantes.

Les services de garde dans les écoles doivent être accessibles à tous les enfants de la collectivité, quel que soit le conseil scolaire. La section de langue française n'a aucun pouvoir de décision quant à l'utilisation des espaces dans les édifices du conseil. Il y a encore confusion vis-à-vis des responsabilités de chaque partie, si bien que les conseils scolaires semblent attendre que les choses se tassent avant de s'engager à offrir des services de garde. Il est essentiel que le gouvernement clarifie ce règlement et qu'il apporte un meilleur appui financier aux conseils scolaires qui veulent offrir des services de garde dans leurs écoles.

Les recommandations que nous proposons sont les suivantes : soit, que le gouvernement de l'Ontario s'engage à adopter une politique globale pour les services éducationnels en langue française destinés à la petite enfance, et qu'il prenne les initiatives qui s'imposent pour assurer aux enfants francophones l'égalité d'accès à des services éducatifs de qualité équivalents à ceux offerts aux enfants anglophones, tant dans les garderies que durant les années préparatoires.

L'autre recommandation serait que le gouvernement amende la partie 11 de la Loi sur l'éducation, pour donner à la section de langue française le pouvoir exclusif de désigner et de gérer les locaux dans les édifices scolaires destinés aux garderies de langue française.

M. R. F. Johnston : Premièrement, il faut dire, à mon avis, que vous avez raison d'être fâché concernant notre dernier rapport. Tantôt, pendant notre conférence de presse concernant ce rapport-là, je pense que le comité est en train de reconsidérer les problèmes de gestion et financement du système français, et si nous n'avons pas l'idée que le gouvernement changerait d'idée concernant la gestion et spécialement la Loi 75, j'espère que, dans nos prochaines réunions qui auront lieu en été, nous aurons le temps de nous concentrer sur cette question pour avoir des recommandations précises. Personnellement, et comme député du Nouveau Parti démocratique, je pense que nous ne pouvons pas utiliser l'excuse des cours pour éviter nos responsabilités. J'espère que nous pourrions en venir à un consensus sur ces questions.

Mais j'ai une question importante concernant les garderies, parce que, après la présentation des conseils scolaires francophones, j'ai été frappé par le fait que le manque de garderies unilingues est peut-être la clé de l'assimilation pour les francophones. J'aimerais savoir le pourcentage des écoles françaises qui offrent des services de garde maintenant. Avez-vous une idée du nombre qui ont des services de garde et du nombre qui n'en ont pas ?

Mme Germain : Elles sont très peu nombreuses. Par exemple, dans la région où j'habite, région qui couvre cinq comtés, Northumberland, la région de Durham, Haliburton et deux autres comtés, il n'y a qu'un seul conseil scolaire qui ouvrira un service de garde francophone à Whitby en mars prochain. C'est le seul pour les cinq régions dont je parle. Je sais qu'il y en a une autre dans le sud-ouest et qu'il y en a peut-être une ou deux dans le nord, alors elles sont très peu nombreuses.

M. R. F. Johnston : Est-ce qu'il y a une étude qui existe concernant les pratiques des francophones qui utilisent les services de garde : le nombre de garderies anglophones, le nombre de garderies bilingues, le nombre de solutions privées, des choses comme ça ; est-ce qu'il y a une étude là-dessus ?

Mme Germain : Le rapport n'est pas encore rédigé ; il devrait être prêt d'ici un mois. Les employés du Réseau ont fait les recherches. Ils sont actuellement en train de rédiger ce rapport. D'ici un mois, on devrait connaître la situation à travers l'Ontario pour tout ce qui concerne les services de garde francophones. L'étude comparative avec les services de garde anglophones devrait se faire durant la prochaine année. On pense que peut-être à l'été on devrait être en mesure de fournir de bonnes statistiques là-dessus.

M. R. F. Johnston : L'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario a laissé l'idée avec nous que même dans les régions de Prescott et Russell et d'Ottawa, où il y a beaucoup de francophones, la plupart utilisent les garderies bilingues ou unilingues anglais, pas français.

Mme Germain : C'est un phénomène qui existe, que les francophones utilisent les services unilingues anglais, sauf que les gens sont de plus en plus conscients du fait que, lorsqu'ils envoient leurs enfants dans un service de garde anglophone, ils arrivent à la maternelle, au jardin, et ils ne fonctionnent pas aussi bien que les enfants qui sont déjà allés dans le service de garde français. On voit une différence très marquée entre les

enfants qui vont dans les services de garde francophones.

M. Brihmi : J'aimerais bien enrichir cela en disant que, actuellement, les francophones dans des régions envoient leurs enfants dans les garderies unilingues anglaises parce qu'ils n'ont pas d'autres alternatives. Ils n'ont pas de garderies unilingues françaises où leurs enfants pourraient s'épanouir, apprendre et grandir dans un environnement apte et qui pourrait répondre le mieux à leurs besoins.

Comme on vient de l'apprendre, il est vrai qu'on n'a pas les chiffres et les données exacts et scientifiques à vous présenter, mais on sait très bien — Je peux parler de la région du grand Toronto et je sais qu'on n'a aucun conseil scolaire, soit public ou séparé francophone, qui offre des services de garde. On commence présentement à créer des garderies françaises et cela vient de commencer il y a presque une année de cela.

Cela fait que, dans des régions, on voit que les francophones envoient leurs enfants aux garderies bilingues et unilingues anglaises, parce que, jusqu'à date, ces gens-là n'ont pas eu le choix pour envoyer leurs enfants aux garderies françaises.

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M. R. F. Johnston : Il est bien possible que nous ne terminions pas nos efforts sur ce rapport-ci avant peut-être le début du mois d'avril. Si votre rapport est fini avant ça, nous en aurions un grand besoin.

Mme Germain : Il nous fera plaisir de vous le faire parvenir.

The Chair : One point for clarification. The mix of terms between school boards and—I will wait until you have your translators and I will call the next questioner.

M. Villeneuve : Puis-je moi aussi vous remercier pour votre présentation. Madame Germain, tout particulièrement, vous êtes au service de garderies francophones : est-ce que c'est privé ou est-ce que ça a affaire au ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires ? Pouvez-vous expliquer un petit peu ?

Mme Germain : Les membres du Réseau ontarien des services de garde francophones ne sont que des organismes à but non lucratif. Actuellement, nous n'avons pas de membres ; on ne refuse pas de les représenter mais on encourage plutôt les comités de parents, les groupes de parents à se mettre sur pied et à former des services de garde francophones.

Au début, l'an dernier, le réseau regroupait treize membres; on en compte maintenant au-delà d'une trentaine. Les groupes de parents poussent comme des champignons. Des services de garde se développent de plus en plus, mais les conseils scolaires ne sont pas toujours prêts à assurer des locaux pour les francophones. On se trouve souvent confronté au fait d'avoir à partager les locaux avec des anglophones, à offrir des programmes d'immersion ou à des conditions que les conseils scolaires mettent parfois pour que les services de garde puissent travailler dans les locaux du conseil scolaire.

M. Villeneuve : Quand on a affaire avec notre jeune population à partir de la naissance jusqu'à l'âge scolaire, on a affaire avec au moins trois ministères : le ministère de la Santé, le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires, le ministère de l'Éducation ainsi qu'avec les conseils scolaires. Il y a probablement des lacunes et il y a probablement aussi de la duplication qui se fait. Alors, auriez-vous des recommandations à faire ici? Est-ce que ça devrait être un domaine indépendant, le domaine de la jeunesse, ou est-ce qu'on peut continuer dans une situation où on a affaire avec peut-être trois grands ministères ainsi que des conseils scolaires?

Mme Germain : Le Réseau se penche actuellement sur cette question-là, mais on n'a pas encore pris de décision. On n'a pas encore de prise de position au niveau politique parce qu'on sent qu'il nous manque encore un peu trop d'informations pour prendre position.

Si je pouvais m'exprimer en mon nom personnel, je dirais que ce serait bien s'il y avait, au ministère de l'Éducation, une section qui serait consacrée à la jeunesse, mais il n'est peut-être pas mon rôle de faire une recommandation personnelle.

M. Villeneuve : C'est probablement un des problèmes auxquels le comité devra faire face. Le comité devra peut-être faire certaines recommandations pour combler les lacunes et éviter un certain degré de duplication qui se produit en ce moment. On vous remercie et on vous demande de songer à ça sérieusement. Peut-être pourrions-nous vous rappeler à nouveau pour avoir vos recommandations additionnelles.

The Chair : I wanted to clarify—I had a sense, and it is whether it is the use of the translation in trying to follow both—the question of school board's jurisdiction and the number of day care spaces allocated in either language. I am just making sure that I understand that you understand the difference, as I am sure you do, about

the education boards' responsibility in JK and SK and the pure day care component, the number of spaces that are available in any one community.

I had a sense that the two were being confused and I just wanted to make sure that we were clear on the topics we were dealing with and not interchanging them. I just had a sense of that and I wanted to make sure of this clarification. I am not asking for a comment; I am just trying to make sure that it is clear. I do understand the complication of the language situation, but I did have a sense that there were school boards intermixed with day care centres and I just wanted to make sure we were clear.

M. Furlong : Vous avez mentionné que, aujourd'hui, les garderies sont ou bilingues ou anglophones et que l'on envoie les enfants à ces garderies-là. Je pense avoir entendu dire que c'est en train de changer maintenant, et je voudrais savoir de quelle façon ça change et avec l'effort de qui. Est-ce que ce sont les conseils scolaires, les associations francophones qui décident qu'ils veulent avoir des garderies unilingues francophones?

J'ai entendu mentionner qu'à Whitby, par exemple — je ne sais pas comment on va faire pour avoir une école, mais je sais que c'est en marche. Si on regarde Durham, par exemple, le centre culturel francophone est à Oshawa — Est-ce qu'il y a une garderie dans le centre culturel? Est-ce que c'est une promotion pour les francophones, pour établir une garderie? Si vous avez de l'espace dans une école pour accommoder une garderie, puisque vous avez mentionné la région de Durham, est-ce que le conseil scolaire ou une autre organisation, le centre culturel, par exemple, a des plans pour établir des garderies de langue française uniquement?

Mme Germain : Dans la région de Durham, j'ai travaillé l'an dernier sur un projet pour établir un centre de service de garde francophone, c'est à dire, un centre de jour, un service de garde parascolaire, un service de garde en milieu familial; c'est ce qu'on appelle le «hub model». Le projet n'a malheureusement pas pu être mis sur pied parce que, étant donné que les fonds dont nous aurions eu besoin pour mettre un tel service sur pied auraient dépassé un million de dollars et que, comme vous le savez, dans la région de Durham nous venons juste d'ouvrir un centre culturel français, un centre communautaire francophone, centre qui a déjà coûté, à nos francophones dans la région, 1,3 millions de dollars — ce qui fait que c'est beau de serrer la ceinture des francophones mais ils ne peuvent pas les serrer tous les jours — c'est la raison pour

laquelle il n'y a pas eu d'autres services francophones dans la région de Durham.

M. Brihmi: Merci beaucoup. On vous rappelle simplement que le document final suivra et, en effet, si le document de la recherche se terminera d'ici le mois d'avril, certainement on vous enverra une copie de cela.

Mme Germain: Le document devrait être prêt pour l'assemblée annuelle du Réseau, qui aura lieu d'ici la fin février.

M. R. F. Johnston: Notre rapport se fera en fin mars, alors cette date nous conviendra.

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The Chair: Our next deputants are from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Mr Wright, Mr Summers and Mr Denman. If you would introduce yourselves, your sections and how you are going to split up your time, we would appreciate it. This committee has discussed a number of things, and I do apologize for the late notice on the specifics as I understand my letter only got passed over to you very recently. There was a communications mixup on the thing, and I apologize ahead of time because I was not aware of it until it had happened. We appreciate very much that you were able in the time frame to appear before us.

MINISTRY OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr Wright: My name is Peter Wright. I am the director of the college affairs branch. To my left is Bill Summers, who is the manager of the program services section in the college affairs branch. To my right is Barry Denman who is the co-ordinator of teacher education in the university relations branch.

As you indicated, we had received your facts on Friday and have spent most of Friday and most of today putting together as much of the information as we could. I think we have for you a package on the college side which contains most of the information you sought. We have calendar descriptions of each of the early childhood education courses, we have information on graduates, on enrolment and on the job placements of the graduates along with some indication of the salary levels that they are receiving.

I will let Barry speak for what has been put together on the university side.

The Chair: Let me just say that we have given the material to Bob Gardner to go over and synthesize for us. He is aware of what the committee was looking for and, just to make our

job a little easier, he will getting back to us either tomorrow or the next day with a digest of all of the things that came in. You can see by the pile there that it is very comprehensive, so we appreciate that very much. Proceed, sir.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This is difficult for all of us on this, and I appreciate that you got that much together. It also, though, makes it pretty difficult to have a line of questioning when we cannot even presuppose what the documentation is. I thought maybe we could limit our exchange this afternoon, not that the facts have never got in my way before.

The Chair: To fully explore this subject matter, we want to make sure that we have an opportunity to do that. Okay. Please proceed, sir.

Mr Denman: From the university point of view, I think we have been able to provide what you requested, which is an overview of the types of primary education available at the faculties of education, the enrolments over the last three years at the faculties for those beginning their teaching career and the number of teachers who have taken upgrading and specialist courses in primary education. As well, we have provided as requested the course descriptions from most of the universities for both the pre-service courses and the additional qualification courses where they are published by the institutions.

The Chair: Okay. I will open it up for questions. I know that some will be asking those questions in a general sense, and then perhaps we can specifically zero in on some of the comments. I appreciate that the information I think is most germane to what the committee is looking for is in fact available on your desk now. If you need some time to organize your line of attack—no, sorry, your questions to be asked; it has been a long day—you can have a short recess, or if you are prepared to receive, proceed.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Without tact. We did get the copy from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in terms of the university side of things, but I have not got a chance to go through that. In your appendix 3, I just want to understand the additional qualification courses. These are individuals who have taken these courses during this period.

Mr Denman: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Can you give us an idea of the number—I do not think I noticed it; if I missed it, I apologize—of people in the province who are now teaching in the primary sections at this stage? Do you know the totals for that?

Mr Denman: Offhand I would simply be making a guess. No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The only reason I ask is that it is hard for me to tell how significant the additional qualification side of things is without knowing how many are actually out there, whether we are getting 50 per cent of them who are upgrading themselves to be able to get additional appropriate training or whatever. We do not have a really good idea of what the percentage uptake is of teachers who have gone through the basic training to those who have been upgraded. Do we know that sort of thing?

Mr Denman: I can provide that for you. The only statistic I can give you off the top of my head is that there are approximately 102,000 or 104,000 teachers in Ontario. On a grade basis breakdown, I would ask that you specify what you mean by primary. Everyone seems to have a different definition. Then we can give you the percentage by grade.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I sure hope the ministry and I have the same one, which goes from junior kindergarten to the end of grade 3. I begin to wonder when I see some policy come forward. It would be interesting if there were a breakdown of those that are in kindergarten and those that are in grades 1, 2 and 3. That would be fascinating, if that is not too difficult a thing to pull off your computers. I do not want to create gratuitous work, do I? No, I do not want to this time. I have changed. I am mellowing in my waning days here.

If it is not hard to get that information, it would be quite interesting to see if we can actually get some idea about how much actual upgrading goes on. I suppose it is impossible to pick out on a yearly basis, last year, for example, how many people went through, got their primary emphasis in their training and became kindergarten teachers without ever having had a kindergarten practicum. Does anybody ever do a follow-up to see if that occurs and where it occurs?

We were hearing, for instance, just earlier on, that it would be possible for teachers to get their practicums in grades 1, 2 and 3 and then get hired by a board in a junior kindergarten, having never had any experience of 25 kids pulling at their knees and wanting to do water play. Has anybody ever done that kind of study to see what the connection is between the actual training and the actual placement out of those programs?

Mr Denman: By grade, I would doubt it. Teachers are certified, as you are aware, for two divisions. Universities do not report the practicum placements to the Ministry of Colleges and

Universities nor to the Ministry of Education. So I think that might be a little difficult to trace. Certainly it is possible to do it by going back to the universities and asking them to go through their files but, as you say, that might be a rather onerous task.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would be an interesting study, though, of even one faculty, to see what happened in terms of the actual jobs people ended up with in the first three years of their careers, for instance, after having graduated, to see what the connection was. The reason I raised this is because of my concerns about practicum in general at the university level.

I wonder if you could tell me the answer to a question I asked somebody from the faculties, that is, what is the average practicum time spent in that year? How many hours do they get in the classroom? Can you give me a better idea? They were not able to give me an idea. Does it range from faculty to faculty and, if so, what is the range?

Mr Denman: First of all, in terms of your interest in an individual faculty tracing the actual hiring of its students, some I believe have done so. I would suggest that through the Ontario Association of Deans of Education you might find the ones that have done those kinds of longitudinal studies. In terms of practicum, the minimum requirement is 40 days in a classroom.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that 48-hour days, 46-hour days?

Mr Denman: It is 40 full teaching days. That is, they must be there the same hours the teachers are required to be there, which is 15 minutes before the opening of school until 15 minutes after the official closing of school.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So we can say about eight hours. Is that right? Seven or so? That is about 300-plus hours.

Mr Denman: That is the minimum and many faculties have made arrangements for more than that. Notably York University at the moment has an expanded practicum for most of its primary-junior teachers so that they are spending two days per week in a classroom, two days per week in the academic setting and one day a week on individual study or extra work in the class.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If I might jump to Bill Summers for a second, what is the range that we see for the community colleges? The Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology could not tell us when they were here the other day about their practicum range. We heard from Centennial that its range is between 500 and

1,000, as far as the college could tell. I am wondering if you have any idea what it works out to at the various ECE training things in the colleges.

1700

Mr Summers: We do. The average for the system would be about 700 hours for the two-year program, so that would be 350 for each year. The range would probably go from 250 per year up to 400 or 450, but 350 is a pretty good average.

Mr R. F. Johnston: This raises a question to me about standards. I know that there is a certain independence for faculties and for colleges, but it also strikes me that some pretty good idea of what the standard that somebody is coming out with in the ECE degree or from a faculty would be something you would normally be expecting this late on in the development of our education for young children, and even in terms of our development of the child care system.

That strikes me as a very broad range of pedagogy, number one, that is available in the faculties or in the colleges. I could go on to more questions, I guess, about the number of developmental theory hours for instance, and try to get that from you—I could not get that from the association of deans either—and see if you could give me the range of that and you could do the same for me for the ECE courses in the province.

Do you know that kind of information offhand in terms of the amount of the range of time that is spent on developmental theory of learning for small children? Do you have any idea about that in the colleges?

Mr Summers: No. Only the theory component of the whole program, but no more than that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Because it does strike me that we should have some kind of notion about how much theory people are getting, what kind of theory they are getting as they come out into our system. Everybody in the province of Ontario expects children to come out with the same outcomes, clear goals and Radwanskian presumptions that people should be coming out with, yet we do not have an idea of what we are asking for in terms of curriculum development. I noticed, for instance, again from Centennial, that it had a fair amount of curriculum development, although Community and Social Services demands nothing in terms of a notion of curriculum for early childhood education. It is all to do with nurturing and custodial care. Yet when I asked the association of the deans how much time goes into development of curriculum in JK-SK in their

faculties, they were not able to give me an answer.

I am asking from the ministry, therefore, what our expectations are of some kind of recognizable standards from which we can then say, "If you go to York, you are going to get as good an education as if you go to Queen's or to Lakehead or wherever." How is it that we measure these things? I have the same question to the colleges. Is there not a ministry rule there for having a better handle on this?

Mr Summers: Well, since my light is on, why don't I start? In the colleges, there has certainly, I think, been more of a tradition of some program standards for a variety of programs. Some of these standards go back to the 1970s. The ones in the health area are ones that, I think, have been more prescriptive. In the health area, for example, nursing and others, there are very detailed standards which in fact get to the level of hours of instruction for various components.

In other areas, such as technology in the social services, the ministry has been less prescriptive over time, I think, largely based on the consensus of views of educators, the need for local flexibility. We have, however, been reconsidering that whole question of provincial standards for college programs, and through Vision 2000, which some of you may know is looking at the mandate of the college system, the whole question of provincial standards has come up and the ministry has issued a discussion paper last summer on the whole question of provincial standards.

This does not address why we do not have them in as much detail as perhaps we ought to in the ECE area, but we can say we are looking at them again and there seems to be a greater consensus within the educators in the college system that perhaps a return to standards is important, particularly in some of these human service fields.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Where do we go then with the whole question of the autonomy of the university and the faculty in that sense? Is that sacrosanct notion such that the ministry cannot demand the kind of comparators I am raising here.

Mr Denman: I am not sure I can address the concept of comparative, but certainly while the universities are autonomous institutions, their teacher education programs are very much driven by and bounded by regulation and policy. Each university has an agreement with the Minister of Colleges and Universities and the Minister of Education in which there is an annual review

process that must be carried out co-operatively. That is currently under review by the Teacher Education Council, Ontario, and the new model we hope will be implemented soon.

But the basic programs that are offered by the faculties of education are driven by regulation 269 which outlines the basic parameters. Some of those parameters are further defined by ministry curriculum guidelines and policy documents, so although the focus at one university may differ from that of another, the amount of time they spend on any given topic, the basic outline of the program, is the same across the province.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The range then of time that a student might actually be in the classroom, the practicum placement, is how broad again?

Mr Denman: It is a minimum of 40 days and there is also a minimum amount of time that must be contact hours within the classroom at the university. Some universities have chosen to expand one or the other or both of those and in so doing expand the traditional university year.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Maybe I am crazy or something—

The Chair: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, don't answer that. I have proven my sanity by suggesting I would leave. I am finally coming to my senses.

It strikes me as somewhat ironic that to teach young children and JK through grade 3, you might require somebody to have 500 hours less in practical experience than you would somebody who is going to be in a custodial relationship, according to our legislation under the Ministry of Community and Social Services, in a child care centre, and you would perhaps have very similar kinds of course outline.

If I were to compare some of the things, for instance, that are offered at Centennial College or Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and the equivalencies there, you are expecting fairly important developmental considerations to be understood by people in the early childhood section, and yet no equivalency is accepted for those courses in terms of our faculties of education in terms of those being anything close to representing part of a bachelor of arts, for instance, in terms of entrance into a BA, or nothing that is down, as I can see it, in a major rule which says that even if you had your BA and had your early childhood education, you would get any credit for that early childhood knowledge when you would go in for your curriculum in the faculty. Right? This strikes me as a bit out of

whack. This is what you would call the rhetorical question, to myself I suppose.

The Chair: Whose light is on now?

Mr Jackson: Hansard is having a ball with all your nodding.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I do not know if you want to comment on that, but it strikes me that if we are saying our teachers are worth so much more—we say that in terms of their dollar value and in terms of the equivalencies, etc—why is it that we are expecting so little practical experience of them in terms of dealing with those kids in comparison with what we are expecting of somebody who goes into a day care centre?

Mr Wright: In short, we have no answer. You will have to talk to the people who design and develop the courses and set the standards. You did touch on the idea of transfer and co-operation. I think we are seeing more of that.

Historically, as you are aware, the colleges and universities grew up on somewhat separate tracks and there was not either great encouragement or at the time perceived to be great need to build a large number of bridges between them. Clearly that view is changing. A year or so the then minister, Mrs McLeod held a conference which began to encourage that kind of co-operation, and indeed there are, I think, five examples now in the ECE area of universities and colleges beginning to co-operate and seeing what is possible there.

1710

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is what we were told. I would be interested to know what they are. I know Ryerson and York—

Mr Summers: Ryerson with Durham College is one that is at an early stage, but there are some—this is basically a university agreeing ahead of time to grant so much equivalence for a course done—Lambton and Brock, Niagara and Brock, Seneca and York, although that is a bit more of a joint program and it is often university students going into the college, and St Clair and the University of Windsor.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The Ryerson one is done with Centennial, where they have an agreement on it as well for two years. There is an interesting little thing that talks about the course being equivalent, but it is on an individual basis that the student is considered for equivalence; it is not on the course basis.

Mr Summers: These are ones where there is an agreement up front that if you maintain, for example, a B average you will get one year of credit towards a three-year BA. There are a lot of

the individual agreements, such as the Centennial-Ryerson one, where college grads can come out of any program and negotiate with the university course by course, but these are agreements on a program basis where the rules are set up front.

I should also mention that there are at least three other developing examples of this that we know of through our liaison where there are colleges and universities at the early stages of trying to negotiate an agreement around ECE.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would be a good thing.

Mr Philip: I would like to ask some questions about entrance and screening of potential applicants to the early childhood education programs. Is it safe to say that there has been an increasing emphasis on past academic performance at the expense of what we would call life experiences, creativity, other things that could be looked at, and is this a fair balance?

Mr Wright: I think the short answer to that is you would have to speak to the individual colleges and how they had assessed the applicants. The ministry does not get that kind of information you are alluding to. Offhand we have no information, but I am not aware of any particular change recently.

Mr Philip: If I went from one province to another, would I not see perhaps a different emphasis in this area of screening potential teachers?

Mr Wright: I honestly do not know.

Mr Denman: Is your question restricted to early childhood educators or teachers?

Mr Philip: Early childhood educators and teachers.

Mr Denman: The screening processes at the faculties of education across Ontario do differ significantly. There are some institutions that base their entrance primarily on academic performance and a number of others that give an increasing amount of credence to the life experience, as you have called it. If you went to other provinces, I think you would probably find the same is true.

Mr Philip: I guess I have some concern. I recognize that you have to have a certain scholastic skill, obviously, in order to be a teacher or to pass any course, and depending on the courses, certain performance in sciences or English or whatever, but I guess I am concerned that some of the professions that deal with people and that require people skills are placing more and more emphasis on what I would call the quick screen. The easiest thing, of course, to

measure is what the person's academic performance is without looking at other factors.

I am just wondering if that is a concern of yours at the ministry and if that concern is getting down to the various faculties, or if there is any way of dealing with that and if there is any way of evaluating what comes out at the other end. Can you predict that certain types of skills, in addition to academics, are an advantage prior to entry, so that we can at least predict who is more likely to be a good teacher or early childhood educator or whatever?

Mr Denman: You have listed a lot of the concerns and recommendations that came out of the three-year study on teacher education, which are in this report that we can certainly make available if you would like it.

In terms of the admission criteria and the various weight they are given, neither this nor the backup documentation suggests that any one method or any one criterion should be given more weight than another, but it does say: "Let's have a look at it. The existing process may have some faults." As a follow-up to this report, I am sure the committee is aware of the existence of the Teacher Education Council, Ontario. The entire admissions procedure is under examination by all four of the constituents of that, which includes the faculties of education themselves.

Mr Neumann: I was going to ask some questions on the recognition of credits from college at the university level, but I think that has been covered adequately.

The Chair: It has been explored; fine.

Mr Villeneuve: I notice in appendix 1 that there appears to be a very rapid increase in the number of teachers enrolled for, I guess, the teaching of primary junior divisions. That would lead me to believe—I realize that enrolment in the school is rising, but has it risen by 25 per cent in the last three years as has the enrolment of teachers oriented towards that particular teaching area?

Mr Denman: I am not sure I understand your question.

Mr Villeneuve: Relatively speaking, would you be aware of what the enrolment increase has been in the last three years at the student level? We know it is somewhere around 25 per cent for teachers oriented towards primary junior divisions. Is there some relationship here?

Mr Denman: As you can see from the gross number at the bottom, total enrolment, there has been about a 25 per cent increase in the number of candidates at faculties of education, so it is not

just at the primary level. That is to reflect the fact that we have had a perceived teacher shortage, that because of several factors—some government policy changes, an early retirement window—there has been a greater need for teachers. Overall the faculties increased by, as you can see, 25 per cent to meet that need. There is no real relationship between the number of primary.

Mr Villeneuve: Again, the adaptability of a person to teach these very important formative years in education—of course the academic training is most important, but I think adaptability is just as, if not more important. Could you explain a bit what happens here, I realize universities are autonomous, but the adaptability I think is most important. When a teacher is hired to teach these junior divisions, whether he or she does a good job or not, does seniority come into play? Could you give us a little bit of explanation on that. I am coming from an area here that—it may be a ticklish question to ask, but I am always concerned that somehow we overlook some of our good, well-adapted younger teachers, fresh out of college, in order to satisfy requirements within contracts. I worry about that.

Mr Denman: You are asking me questions that I think are better put to boards of education in terms of their hiring practices or to the faculties of education in terms of their admission practices. From a ministry point of view, I am not sure I can answer that. Perhaps you could clarify specifically what you are after.

1720

Mr Villeneuve: You are probably right; the question would be more accurately put to those people who are on the hiring line. I have spoken to a lot of frustrated young people who were not allowed to go into the teaching profession because of a lack of space back in the mid to late 1970s. Apparently the reaction did not occur soon enough and now we have large increases. There seems to be a feast-or-famine phenomenon here that makes me wonder where the guidance to universities is coming from. I realize they are autonomous, but there has to be some guidance coming from somewhere. Could you enlighten me on that?

Mr Denman: I hear you saying supply and demand without coming out with it. One of the major issues raised by this report was problems with supply and demand. There was a separate report done by Dr Laverne Smith of York University on teacher supply and demand up to 2008. Based on those two reports, one of the first

tasks given to the teacher education council and to the Ministry of Education was to have a look at the supply-and-demand situation; to clean up the problems we have had in the past and be able to make better predictions in the future.

To that end, both the council and the Ministry of Education have been looking very closely at it. The Ministry of Education particularly has developed or is in the process of developing a new predictive model, computerized, based on the findings of the two reports and some outside expertise, and I am sure people would love to come and tell you what they have found.

From the Ministry of Colleges and Universities point of view, we will receive input from them as to the number of candidates that will be required, but we have not been involved in the model itself.

Mr Villeneuve: Because the formative years are so very important to just how a child reacts in later years, I think adaptability has to carry a lot of weight. I hope it does, and I guess I am asking a very rhetorical question to myself. Somehow, somewhere, I would just like to see how the weigh scale is balanced or what the equilibrium is here versus knowledge and schooling as to adaptability to these very important years in a child's life.

Mr Callahan: Again, I am a visitor in this. I guess it is indirectly related to what is before this committee. The world has changed significantly from when I graduated from university, where a BA got you a leg up in looking for a job. Today that is not necessarily the case. In fact, many people graduating from university with BAs cannot get jobs. It seemed to me that we were being lobbied by university students that they were attending classes where the classes were overcrowded, and then we had the reverse in the community colleges, where people were actually being laid off or losing their jobs because either the class did not exist or it was too small to teach.

I know you commented on this in answer to Mr Johnston's question about being able to move credits from universities to certain community colleges. Has there ever been any overall consideration of that being done on a grand basis so that you could deplete the large-scale university classes and allow these people to take maybe one year of university, a year of community college and back and forth in some organized way to give them a little bit of the real world plus the academic world?

Mr Wright: I am not sure if any consideration has actually been given to that specific proposal. What it would require would be standardization

of programs at every institution, at every college in the college level and every university, so that you would have some reasonable means of assessing the transferability of credits earned. I think at the moment we are moving on a more incremental basis. The number of agreements that Bill spoke of earlier is a sign that movement is being made towards that kind of goal.

I would like to disabuse you of one notion, and that is that there has ever been lots of vacant space in the colleges. The college enrolment, while it has not grown of recent years at the rate the university has, none the less has remained around 100,000 students steadily through this period.

Mr Callahan: I probably should not say this, but was that not one of the complaints of the teachers who were recently out on the bricks? At least, that is what they told me. I met some of them on Bay Street and they told me that was exactly what it was: the classes were either too small or there were not sufficient students to warrant the class continuing.

It seemed to me to make a lot of sense, that it solved two problems by lowering the number of kids in university who are taking straight academic courses and when they get out there they are going to find there is just not a heck of a lot there for them—I hate to say that—and increasing the number of people who are going into the practical courses. Mix a little practical with a little academic. I think the world has changed dramatically. You are saying that is not the case.

Mr Wright: There are people being laid off in the colleges for a number of reasons, not the least of which is student shifts in preferences in courses. In terms of early childhood education, the information that we have provided to the committee indicates that this in fact has been a growing area in the colleges, going from around 2,500 to up to about 3,200 in the last three years. So there has been a substantial growth in college enrolment in that particular area.

Mr Callahan: How easy is it for someone, say, taking two years of university, to move into an early childhood education course at a community college or vice versa, back the other way? Does that happen?

Mr Wright: I am not familiar with whether it happens from university to college. I know the agreements we spoke of are generally the other way; having completed ECE, they go on to college.

Mr Summers: I know of at least one college that runs an intensive program in ECE for

university graduates. That is in Ottawa. The whole program is run in addition to their normal two-year program and it is fast-track; in one year a university graduate can get an ECE diploma. Generally the numbers of students going between the two sectors are roughly equivalent; about three per cent of college graduates go on to a university for study and about three per cent of new college entrants have had some university education.

Mr Callahan: Finally, does the ECE person then have to go to teachers' college in order to teach?

Mr Wright: Barry may want to comment. I think there are some combined Bachelor of Arts-Bachelor of Education programs that an ECE graduate can enter. So it would depend on what program at the university they had enrolled in.

Mr Denman: There is at least one university that has a Bachelor of Education-ECE program combined. It is a two-year program at the University of Toronto. So students do indeed get both an Ontario teaching certificate and a certificate in early childhood education.

The Chair: I have two short questions just for information. Mr Wright, if I got you correctly I think you mentioned some of the standards were the same, for example, in nursing. The kinds of things that were the same were the number of hours in the practicum versus the theory in both faculties. I just wondered if you could clarify that. I am talking specifically about nursing, but it may go the same with ECE.

Mr Summers: There are a few programs in the health area where the program standards do specify the minimum hours in theory and in clinical. These standards, for example in nursing, are only on college programs. The university programs that train nurses are not subject to those standards, but they are subject to external accreditation to ensure that the global standards are met. There are a few other health science programs that do have that level of detail.

The Chair: So someone who is writing for the registered nurse certification, university or college, writes the same licensing examination. Is that correct?

Mr Summers: Yes. That is correct.

The Chair: To get to that point, theoretically, it would not matter which you took, university or college; to get the same information to write your examination to be licensed does not say that you have to demonstrate practical competency to write that exam but just really that you know the

theory. Is that generally the case or not? I just want to make sure I have it straight.

1730

Mr Summers: I am not a specialist in the RN examinations, but one of my understandings is that it relates to an accreditation of the program and that while the examination tests the theory part, they want an assurance that the graduate has come out of a program with a certain amount of clinical experience and that the supervisors of the clinical experience have attested that the graduate is competent in that area. So you are right. They want to be assured that there is a sufficient clinical component in the program.

Mr Philip: You would have to pass your practical or laboratory before you would be allowed to write the RN examination in the first place.

Mr Summers: That is right. The college, for example, has to attest that the student has successfully completed the program before he is eligible to write the examination and the clinical is part of the program.

Mr Philip: That is your safeguard.

Mr Summers: Yes.

The Chair: I was just trying to clarify that because we heard some comments about colleges and universities not talking to each other about common standards in Nursing Bedpan 101 taught by the same person using the same book in a college and in a university. The college person does not get any credit for the university entrance and yet the end result is the same: you have to have had so much clinical verified and you have to write the same exam.

It just strikes me as very strange that all of this cannot happen, particularly in your foundation courses which are virtually the same courses, as I understand it, and what you have said confirming the practical on both sides and the theory more in

the university than in the college. It strikes me as a little strange, but that is just my comment.

Does the Ministry of Colleges and Universities track students who transfer out of college into a university, whether it is in Ontario or another jurisdiction?

Mr Wright: We know in broad terms how many go. As Bill said, it is about three per cent who go on. We do not have an individual student identifier which tracks a student through the colleges and into university and through his university education.

The Chair: It has been mentioned, perhaps more by me than by anybody else on the committee, but the fact is that somebody from Cambrian College in Sudbury or Northern College can transfer to Western Michigan University to get a mining engineering degree—but only if he can afford to do it—and yet cannot do it in Ontario.

The other example is Lake Superior State in Michigan, which charges the same tuition for northern Ontario residents as for Michigan residents. Therefore, a number of college people transfer, get full credit in their courses, come back and write the same examination, whether it is licensing in nursing or in mining engineering, and nobody asks them where they came from and yet they seem to do all right. I just wonder what is going on because they are going to other jurisdictions. I just wondered whether you had the information. That is all I have. Thank you very much.

The committee is recessed until tomorrow at 10 o'clock. We are going to be in committee room 1, so take all your material. There will be another committee in here tomorrow. I appreciate the committee's patience and forbearance in supporting the Chair in his request to try to keep a balanced presentation. We are adjourned until tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1732.

ERRATUM

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Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Tuesday 6 February 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday 6 February 1990

The committee met at 1016 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Vice-Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, if we can get going, I would like to begin the hearings for the select committee on education. Our first presenter this morning is the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools. Would you like to identify yourselves for the purpose of Hansard, please.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Mr McBurney: Thank you very much. I am Lyle McBurney, the executive director of the association. Beside me is Diana Hughes, who is in charge of teacher education for the Waldorf School system. If there are technical questions about early childhood education, she can handle those much more competently than I.

I suppose we will stick, to some extent, to our philosophical point that we make consistently before the committee. It reminds me of one time when I was vacationing and I met a couple from Tulsa and she said: "We're from Tulsa. That's where the oil is." To some extent I think this select committee, in so far as independent school futures are concerned, may be where the oil is. Certainly, we see some good things.

Mr Keyes: Or gas.

Mr McBurney: Some kinds of that stuff are saleable.

We would like to say some good things—we will—about the third report of the select committee, and to some extent our presentation today relates directly to that. In my usual way, I will read an introductory statement and then we can go from there at your pleasure.

The Ontario Association of Alternative Independent Schools is pleased to be making its fourth appearance before the select committee as it turns its attention to the subject of continuing education, and early childhood education in particular. Many types of independent schools operate early childhood programs and have characteristically done so out of particular views about the nature of a child and the process of learning long before the term itself was coined or

public educators began to speculate about extending curriculum downward to include children below the legally prescribed compulsory school age. Montessori, Waldorf and Jewish day schools are some prominent at-hand examples of educational communities that have pioneered curricula for very young children related to particular educational, ideological, religious and cultural traditions.

Indeed, many independent schools found and operate their schools by starting at the early childhood years, adding grade levels year by year as students progress in the pedagogical tradition represented by their school. In this, as in other educational practices which originated in non-public schools, the independent school sector has broken the ground and acted as an educational laboratory for the educational community at large.

The question we bring before the committee is, what role and place does the committee envision for independent schools in the making and execution of public policy concerning the education of very young children?

The innovative practices and experience contained in the independent school sector have been acknowledged in various ways by the present and previous governments, the Shapiro commission and the select committee. All children of preschool age will be affected by any general government policy development in this area. If there are benefits to be conferred, will the government's commitment to equal educational opportunity for every child in Ontario include the children enrolled in early education programs in independent schools?

In raising these questions, OAAIS is much encouraged by the third report of the select committee on the financing of education, which emphasizes that the place and role of independent schools definitely needs to be officially addressed by the government of Ontario, recommendation 31 stating, "The government should formally respond to the Shapiro report."

We also appreciate the committee's candour in reporting on a range and variance of opinion within the committee about the relationship of independent schools to the present publicly funded systems and the possibility of cost-sharing, services sharing or public funding, as

reflected somewhat negatively in recommendation 32: "The government should not pursue the concept of full public funding for independent schools."

The committee has aptly noted there exists a similar range and variance of opinion within the independent school sector, as with the public, about the potential for cost sharing, services sharing or public funding of independent schools. In these circumstances we strongly commend the committee for organizing and basing the third report on financing on well-developed, well-defined principles of equity, advocacy and accountability.

It has been a theme of OAAIS and other presenters before the committee that socially constructive reform in the structure of provincial education calls for consultation among all education stakeholders about basic principles which can help and justly recognize the respective rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in supporting and delivering educational service in Ontario.

OAAIS finds many of the observations and recommendations of the report resonate agreeably with our own association articulation of the principles of equity, advocacy and accountability as found in Guidelines for Public Justice in Education, the October 1988 report of the Ontario Education Policy Options Task Force. That report, of course, has been submitted and is on file with the committee. For example, the guidelines develop the principle of equity as a matter of fairness, distinct from the principle of "equality" taken as a synonym for "the same," and in this the committee agrees also with Dr Shapiro.

We can agree therefore with the select committee's definition of the goal of equity being "to ensure sufficient resources such that schools and boards can provide equal opportunity for every student to reach their full potential." In this context and looking at education as a continuum, the committee has already raised the question, "Who is 'every student' here?" and has served notice of the need for "a contemporary definition of who education serves and a funding model that can provide the resources for this broader scope in an equitable and flexible manner."

In respect to the Ministry of Health's school health support services program, the committee did not hesitate to recommend that "the Ministry of Education should co-ordinate with the Ministry of Health and other relevant agencies to ensure that necessary health services are equally available to students in independent schools."

The universality of access and funding portability accepted in the case of health services fully supports the principle of equity by showing that the personal dignity of a child enrolled in an independent school is as worthy of the care and concern of public authorities as the child enrolled in a public, separate or francophone school.

The development of public policy in respect to early childhood education or any service that affirms the dignity and worth of a child, wherever he or she attends school, needs the consistent support of all public-spirited education stakeholders. The committee, I think, has served an important purpose in that recommendation.

The committee's third report repeatedly stressed the need for the Ministry of Education to develop its policies in consultation and conjunction with the key partners in education as a matter of shared responsibility between parents, students, educators and the community at large. I here borrow freely from the language of the report. In large part, the committee applies the concept of shared responsibility to public, separate, francophone and native peoples' schools. The recommendation that the government of Ontario has a responsibility to respond officially to the Shapiro report acknowledges the difficulty of counting the independent school sector as a full partner in policy discussions so long as the government delays its response to the recommendation of the Shapiro report as to the proper place and role of independent schools.

A further limitation in this regard exists in the lack of any mechanism by which independent schools might collectively make a contribution to ministerial and public discussions that have implications for all schools. The committee will be interested in knowing that there are some current discussions among the province's various independent school associations about the need of a structure that fosters regular conversations among them on matters of common interest or concern, so to some extent the independent schools are looking to their own houses collectively in that way.

The OAAIS suggestions, which I have mentioned from Guidelines for Public Justice in Education, are for the establishment of the Ministry of Education advisory council on independent schools to allow independent schools to participate in consultation and decision-making on public policy matters that have import for their schools and all schools generally.

The select committee has extended the courtesy of regular invitations to us and other independent school groups at each stage of the hearings, thereby setting a good example for participation by the independent school sector in public discourse about the broad issues of education which are now under review. So today we call on the committee to answer the question we raised in the beginning about how the committee envisions the place and role of independent schools by supporting the concept of the immediate establishment of the Ministry of Education advisory council on independent schools to provide an ongoing mechanism by which independent schools can share formally and routinely in policy formation affecting independent and other schools.

We hope the discussion in respect of continuing education and early childhood education contributes to the establishment of that formal process. Thank you for bearing with us in opening the subject to that broader plane.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Lyle. We have a couple of questioners. We will start off with Mr Johnston.

1030

Mr R. F. Johnston: Lyle, this thing strikes me that some kind of an advisory body needs to be established, obviously between your sector and the ministry. I cannot imagine why they would not want that sort of thing. I cannot imagine why there would not be a consensus in the committee on it. Whether or not it makes it today into our day care and child care or early childhood education report is another thing. I am not sure. We will see how the consensus develops. Obviously it will be recorded as one of the recommendations brought before us and one of the things we have to deal with when we get down to discussion.

I wondered, because of the work of Montessori and Waldorf and others, if you have ever done an analysis or just a compendium of the various early childhood education philosophies that are available in your sector at the moment that would be a good primer for people on a committee like this in terms of looking at the different ways that developmental theory have been put into practice compared with what we may see in our present public and separate school systems. Have you ever put that together?

Mr McBurney: It is not something the OAAIS has done to date, but I take that as good advice. Diana may have something to say about

that from her knowledge of her own and perhaps others.

Ms Hughes: We are particularly interested, like everybody else, in our own perspectives, but I would perhaps say that the essential tension which has just been excavated is between the people who see early childhood as the time to "cram everything in and let's get on with it," and those of us represented by Waldorf education and by much of the research that suggests that this rush to inform and educate in a traditional manner is drastic in terms of what it does to the present physical health and future mental health of the child.

This debate is serious. I think it is the crux of the matter. I think it has probably dawned on you by now: Are we going to rush into formal education or are we going to take the qualitative environment of the child seriously?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is that debate not as sharply focused within your own schools, within the overall association, as it is, in fact, within the public school system in a sense, and even more so maybe because you have Waldorf at the one end and you have the other superchild kinds of concepts that are now being developed as well? That is why it would be really interesting to see what sort of pedagogical responses there have been from your sector.

We are starting to get an idea now where the public system is going on this, although the curricula expectations are not very well defined and nobody really has a very clear idea about a number of the questions. Some of them are starting to come into focus in the public system, but I am wondering if it would not, in fact, be very useful to have a look at the various approaches that are being taken within the association, a very broad range of notions, and of, as you say, very different philosophical presumptions that are in those plans.

Ms Hughes: Of course, what makes the independent schools association interesting is that it is different. In the three that I have mentioned here, Montessori and Waldorf agree that the early years are absolutely crucial to what happens later, but what we do within that is actually quite philosophically opposite. We come back to this diversity thing. People have to have some sort of choice here, because if you believe that what you do in forcing the child is detrimental to his or her whole life, you are really in a bind if you have to send him now to enforced junior kindergarten at four years.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If I can draw on your advisory council recommendation, it strikes me

that our committee is looking at not just the possibility for people to have a private choice that they would make for education, which is obviously respected, but at the two systems that will be evolving in the next little while and are being forced by government decision recently to focus much more on this early childhood education sector. But we are not looking at the experiences that are coming from your own system. That is the next reason for having an advisory council, to provide that kind of information so that we would not be missing out on some things that we should know.

That is why I basically say to you, if there is anything you think you can pull together for us—our report is not going to be written, I do not think, until the end of March, something like that—if in the meantime there was something in writing that was either just a sort of compilation of how well Waldorf and Montessori are operating and how some of the other options are working out there, even if you are not doing a cohesive package but are actually just putting together the perspective on it, that would be an interesting thing for the committee to receive, I think, at this stage. We have been getting some information, but I am not exactly excited about the precision of the information that we have been getting around developmental theory and how it is showing itself up in the public system at this stage.

Ms Hughes: I have made my point, though, that you cannot take a mishmash of these three approaches and get something.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I know. I think what we need to do, though, is—

Ms Hughes: There are choices to be made here, and tough ones.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In fact I think that mishmashes are being taken. Therefore, I think it is important, from the other system's perspective, to try to have some notion of what the basic underlying philosophy is. It may be all right within your association to say that the choice can range for individuals as widely as between Montessori and Waldorf, or even more broadly, with more injection of curriculum than even Montessori does, but I am not sure that one can say that for the public system.

You have to have some underlying pedagogic principles upon which you are operating, it seems to me, with a range within it, but I am not sure that that range should be acceptable in all public schools. If it is, it is going to be very confusing for parents not knowing, if their kid goes into one kindergarten, what it is that that

child is going to get as compared with going to the school across the street.

That is why I say it would be really interesting for us to have a much clearer idea of some of the presumptions on the continuum that you can offer, within an association, of freely chosen different approaches. For us it comes down to: Should boards make this decision, should the ministry make the decision or should it be up to individual principals and their schools to make that decision within the public system? I wonder about that.

Mr McBurney: Our way of trying to deal with that was to provide the idea that public education should accept a certain kind of diversity based on the clear articulation of a philosophy of education so parents can make a choice. That, of course, requires exposing them to the opportunity, and it requires some sense of the idea that schools can be different kinds of communities. I think the committee is dealing with that, in any case, in a number of ways. But if a school can define its philosophy of education and it serves broad public purposes, then people can make the choices. That allows for quite distinct things happening. Hence perhaps it is something like the privatization of public education in so far as choice is concerned.

Mr R. F. Johnston: You and I would differ pretty fundamentally on that, but I guess I just take the opposite point of view on what the public responsibility is compared with the private responsibility.

Mr Neumann: How many independent schools are there in Ontario and do you represent all of them?

Mr McBurney: No. There are about 600 and we do not represent all of them. There are about 10 or 12 fairly well defined independent school associations. Now some of them have very little of what I would call political presence. They may not want public funding, they are satisfied with the status quo, or they are simply not experienced in addressing the public policy matter.

I suppose what is unique about our association, which is in a minority and represents less than 100 independent schools, is that in our 15-year history we have tried to deal with these questions in terms of the principles that we feel should be at work in public education and that also address independent school needs beyond our own.

For example, the guidelines for public justice suggest a position not unlike that asked for by the Conference of Independent Schools, which is the traditional private schools of Ontario, that they

would be able to refuse public funding. I am not so sure we would go as far as they do in suggesting that they be completely free as to curriculum, because we believe there is a quid pro quo that takes place if you are going to be part of the public enterprise of education. That is the way that works. If there were a council of independent schools, I presume that all of those 10 or 12 defined groups would want to be there.

Mr Neumann: I will concentrate my questions on the 100 that you represent. Do they offer kindergarten programs?

Mr McBurney: Some do.

Mr Neumann: Not all of them?

Mr McBurney: Not all. Some schools function at the secondary level only and some start at kindergarten without a preschool component, and some, the exact number I do not know at the moment, deal with preschool education.

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Mr Neumann: You are aware that the committee presently is focusing on the early years and trying to wrestle with the problems faced by parents and children, who sometimes have to go through a day where kids are part of the day in a day care centre, or maybe part of the day in a school, part of the day with baby-sitters at the beginning or the end, or transportation from one to the other. These are aside from curriculum issues and teacher training issues and the two streams of day care and kindergarten education, the two training streams, the two mandates.

Do you have any comments on any of those issues that we have been dealing with? Do your schools experience having children in day care and in kindergarten? What kind of transfer of information takes place in terms of working in the best interests of the child where you have children part of a day in a day care, part of a day in your kindergarten? I assume your kindergartens are half day, or are they full day?

Mr McBurney: They can be both.

Mr Neumann: You have both.

Mr McBurney: But in terms of early childhood education, the experience that I have seen—and we made some representations at one time to Judge Thomson when he was looking at this whole section of overlapping jurisdictions—was that independent schools that have early childhood education generally do it in a continuum, that is, there is a philosophy of education which introduces the child to pedagogical practice as education, from an early age. In the case of Montessori education, it is I believe, 24

months. That kind of conflict does not take place within those schools because they have a unified view of how the education is to be delivered and children are there from that age until they graduate or transfer somewhere else.

Mr Neumann: You do not have children that move from one to the other in your schools?

Mr McBurney: There were some schools, because they did not know how to deal with this administratively and trying to meet government on this would have the day care school registers both day care and private school. They recognized that that was anomalous, but there was no place in public policy for the recognition of the school as school before 44 months, which the ministry decreed was—

Mr Neumann: What I am trying to get at—I can understand what you are saying, that there are schools that integrate. I know we have a Montessori school in our community, so I am quite familiar with that. But what I am trying to get at is where you have children in kindergarten, do you not have those same children also in some day care program perhaps, whether it is private home day care or some kind of public day care? Have you addressed the issue?

Mr McBurney: We have not addressed that issue. I really do not know the extent of that. I assume there is some.

Mr Neumann: In the 100 schools that you represent, do you have programs to assist children with special needs like learning disabilities, that kind of thing?

Mr McBurney: Yes. My association does not, but many of the schools do. Sometimes it is simply a locally generated program within the schools and other times it is done in association with other agencies where they find help. It is not uncommon, for example, that parents because of their close involvement with the schools will act as teaching assistants under the guidance of a trained special education teacher to provide special education services in those schools.

Mr Neumann: You do have special education teachers in your 100 schools?

Mr McBurney: Yes.

Mr Neumann: One of the issues that we have been addressing in the committee, in looking at the early years, is early identification of kids who may be at risk. Do you have any comments on how we can improve the process of identifying children who may be at risk?

Mr McBurney: I am not personally competent to deal with that. It is not something that the

mandate of my association addresses directly. I could, as we did on another occasion before this committee, bring resource people who can tell you from their vantage point how that is looked after. I do not know whether Diana Hughes wants to make a comment on that in relation to Waldorf education, but she might.

Ms Hughes: I think almost all children are at risk, and the rush to label them as at risk does not particularly help the situation. I mean that does not help really to answer your question. I think that with everything that comes at a child today, the chances of growing up reasonably healthy are diminishing every day. One really does have to look at much more fundamental questions. I personally believe it is what the environment does to the child that provokes so many of the disabilities.

Mr Neumann: Do you not recognize that some of these disabilities are physiological, genetic?

Ms Hughes: All right. Some of them certainly are, yes.

Mr Neumann: And it does not help to identify them by saying, "They are all at risk so why bother labelling them."

Ms Hughes: I am just trying to make that general point that so much of what we do puts children at risk. I brought this book, in case you are not familiar with it, *Miseducation: Pre-schoolers at Risk*. It is not a Waldorf book. It is a big item right now everywhere. It makes the point that they are all at risk, which I know does not help.

You are thinking of the specific disability of the child, but I am saying if one looked at those conditions that support the healthy growth of the child, it would be less of a problem. Certainly those acute cases are not going to go away and have to be recognized and acknowledged. I am not specifically answering your question but I am saying it has to be put in a much larger context.

Mr Neumann: That is what we are hoping to do.

Mr McBurney: If I can add to that, it seems to me that the strength of the independent school, if you generalize, is usually in the small size and the involvement of people who adhere to a commonly shared ethic. That caring concern, with all its value connotations, is important to give the child the kind of security and practical support it needs where remediation is required.

It seems to me that is the kind of thing public education should endeavour to do, to shorten the administrative chain so that you can encourage

that kind of involvement and create those environments where people are pulling together for a common purpose. It is in that nurturing way that you can deal at least in part with those problems, which as Diana suggests, partly have sociological roots and sometimes have physical or other roots.

Mr Keyes: Just to Diana perhaps, I would ask you to talk a bit about what you see as the ideal way of preparing our teachers for early childhood education. That becomes, to me, one of the more critical issues we are facing today as we bring in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. We may need to make some changes in the whole background that teachers have who are dealing with them. There is a bit of a potential conflict as to whether or not ECE training for teachers at community colleges links in with the type of training that teachers are receiving in faculties of education.

We can spend the rest of today, but I would like to just hear a few of your own comments because you are, as I noticed, a doctoral student. Perhaps you are working in that area. It does give me some concern as to exactly how we are going to bring about the blending between these. I do not want to see that every teacher who works in a JK or SK necessarily has to suddenly be the product of a faculty of education, because I think I have seen some excellent work being done—I know I have—by community colleges in this area.

What do you see as we retain the responsibility for training these people? You may want to just touch later on the type of training that teachers by and large who work in our independent schools are the products of. What is the mix?

Ms Hughes: I am a bit overwhelmed by the question because, as you acknowledge, it is enormous.

Mr Keyes: A doctoral thesis.

Ms Hughes: I do not quite know how to respond, except to speak out of our own experience. In the Waldorf school, we believe that the older, more mature teachers, those with real-life experience and some sort of serenity about life, are those who should be with the youngest children. Certainly we consider our kindergarten teachers at least as important as our high school teachers. Generally speaking, I think it is true that the general perception is that the younger the child, certainly the less status or the less important it is, and we would say the opposite. The younger the child, the more crucial is the quality of the person who is with the children.

How you prepare or develop such people is I guess the question of our whole teacher training, but certainly they need a genuine understanding of child development and different visions of child development. Every week probably now, I have a group from one of the early childhood colleges come to the school and they walk in say, "My God, everybody should at least see this." Just seeing that there are other ways of seeing the child and giving them a greater vision of what working with young children is all about inspires these people who come.

I would invite anyone who is seriously interested to come and see it, because most of us do not really have much vision of what a good early childhood environment is. To train them—how does one train people to be more human?—is a big topic, but I think it is possible. One can provide a training but perhaps not quite in the conventional sense.

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Mr Keyes: I guess what is essential is trying to find how to reach down into deeper understanding with the teachers. Maybe we are going to have to change our faculties of education so that there is a whole area of specialization in the very early years so that you can accommodate some of the philosophies of the Waldorf school, which I have not had a chance to visit—Montessori, I have—and the views held by other independent school groups which may be different.

There may be a great need—I hate to segment them—but perhaps that has become an area of specialization so that people who work there, then work with the early children from the child care through to the end of the primary division, that primary must reach much further down in the training. There may have to be a more extended period of time.

Ms Hughes: Anything that one can do to extend the context in which they see their educational task. I am not necessarily sure that is the way to do it. The people who do our kindergarten program and do our grade school and high school program do a lot of their work together. I am just a little nervous about too much specialization even in the area of teacher training.

Certainly, it is true that one does not need a degree to be really effective with young children. One has to love children. How one determines who really does is another question.

Mr McBurney: The committee may encounter this later in terms of post-secondary education because I am aware, although we are not directly involved, that there are some private free-

standing institutions of post-secondary education which are seeking accreditation in Ontario and that the policy of not granting accreditation to these free-standing institutions is under review. That is being done in association with the Ontario Council on University Affairs, and I think that is a very positive kind of development.

It is coming at it from the other end of the spectrum but what it is exploring I think is the criteria by which different kinds of institutions could turn out their graduates in a recognized manner into the marketplace in Ontario. What you could do about that in relation to community colleges, again, I do not have a clear idea of that.

But it seems to me if there is an acceptance of the idea that different methodologies and philosophies of education have a public place, then either through association or the recognition of independent institutions you will be putting these people into the marketplace and thereby increasing the professional discourse between them and their peers who do it in another way. I think it is a very desirable goal.

Mr Keyes: I am looking at the fact that there are many people who have come up through the various systems and all have been ultimately successful. There are probably examples that could be taken from all the systems of those the system has not served to the maximization of that child's potential as well. How do we provide teacher training that gives them the scope to know of all the major elements they should be nurturing within the child and, as well, how do we recognize so many different approaches to it? It is a big challenge for teacher training.

Ms Hughes: I am not sure that there are so many, two or three different visions of the world and the child. Actually, what the students who come and see me say is that they really only get one. That is why they are so thrilled to find that there is another way of seeing the world; it is a major eye opening.

Mr Keyes: But making that move, though, within the teacher training spectrum is what I am saying is still a major step to be made.

Ms Hughes: Yes, but it would not take much will, within the context of the community colleges, to have a philosophically Montessori-oriented preschool in which they could work and a Waldorf school, and a superkid school, if you have to have that to show the difference. You have to get practical about it. Then they would be exposed because education has just become so abstract that it seems to have no relation any more to the reality of the child's world.

Mr Keyes: Where is your school?

Ms Hughes: It is in Thornhill.

The Vice-Chair: I would like to thank Diana and Lyle for appearing before the committee again. As you mentioned, this is your fourth appearance. We appreciate your views and appreciate having you here.

The next presentation is by the Ontario Principals' Association, if they would come forward, please.

The Chair: Just for the committee's information, I understand that the last three items were handed out by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, some of the material that was dealt with yesterday. If there is any clarification we will do that after the delegations, after you have had a chance to look at it. You also have some written briefs before you in lieu of presentations.

The Ontario Principals' Association: perhaps you can introduce yourselves more formally and then you can proceed.

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Ms Thornham: My name is Sue Thornham and I am the president of the Ontario Principals' Association. I am happy to introduce to you Lorne McEvoy, who is with me this morning from Simcoe. I thank the committee for the opportunity to give some input once again. I have a brief brief this morning in appreciation of the time lines we were given. I would like to quickly walk you through it.

As we began to look at this issue we brainstormed a number of questions and in our model that we are proposing we attempted to answer the questions. It is our proposal that four-year-olds should enter school on their fourth birthday. They should attend a full-day school program. We—this is consistent with our last appearance before you—should be looking at the elimination of grades and promotion through the primary years. We are proposing that at age eight, which is roughly the end of grade 3, children would be streamed into a more traditional kind of—I should not use the word "streamed." Sorry; I did not mean that. They will assume a more traditional organization in terms of the school as we know it.

In terms of program, we would be proposing to expand the current program for four- and five-year-olds. I have done a fair bit of dialoguing with teachers who are dealing with children of this age group who currently attend two and a half hours a day. They see little difficulty in extending that to a full-day program and including such things as more consistent physical

education programs and more hands-on activity, such as where the children cook together and that kind of thing. At the present time, because of the two-and-a-half-hour day, they tend to do these things on alternate days.

We are proposing a continuum of skills and knowledge that would be developed through the ages of four to eight. I learned at a workshop yesterday that children typically learn to read somewhere between the ages of four and eight, so that is something that impacted upon my thinking personally.

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I identified on page 2 some of the kinds of things that would be involved in the programs—social skills and so on. I will elaborate on those further if the committee wishes.

Our intention was to address the needs of children, as we see them, at ages four and five and in addition to try and address some of the frustrations that parents express to us around trying to combine a half-day educational experience with a half-day or greater-than-half-day day care experience. So we are proposing that schools should from nine to 3:30, roughly, have charge of the child for the educational component. Should there be additional day care required, it should take place in the school by child care specialists.

I have listed what we see as the advantages and disadvantages of such a system. Basically, I will speak to those. I will not read them but I will speak to them. A number of these have already been addressed this morning.

One of the things that I think is crucial is that when young children are in school earlier or are in some kind of educational setting, we are better able to collect data on them, so if they are going to be at-risk children we are better able to serve them earlier so that they are not as far behind. I have actually seen examples of this where in a special education program for six-year-olds in a certain jurisdiction there were a high number of children from the separate school. The reason was that at that time they had a junior kindergarten program and the public school board had only a senior kindergarten. There is a real advantage to identifying these children earlier.

Similarly, if parents are going to opt to choose French immersion, for example, for their children, hopefully the school will be able to be of some assistance in terms of gathering data that is appropriate. Some kids do better in French immersion than others; we know that now. I think schools can better advise parents in terms of those kinds of choices.

Somebody mentioned it and I have used the words "fracture effect" in the report. There is a deliberate attempt on our part to have the children in one location with a consistent set of expectations and so on. I can only see benefits to children from that.

Parents would retain the right to keep their children out of school until the age of six, if they so choose.

We are proposing the notion that classes should be small, with a maximum of 20, with at least a qualified teacher and a teacher assistant. The teacher assistant would typically be a person with early childhood qualifications. We are using this model in my school at the current time and it is serving the youngsters very well, I believe.

We are hopeful that the model will reduce the need for day care for four-year-olds and five-year-olds in traditional day care facilities, which will free up some space for those children who are younger.

School boards also would not lose any autonomy in terms of hiring teachers, because that has some really nasty potential in terms of collective agreements, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services would retain complete responsibility for children who are less than four years old.

The disadvantages are that obviously there will be some strain, especially on some of the suburban boards, in terms of school physical plants, and at least initially the model would increase the strain on the current shortage of qualified teachers. The model may have a short-term negative impact on enrolment in day care, although I think in the long run that will be rectified.

That, in essence, is our proposal.

Mr Neumann: You said that children should enter the school system at age four. Did you have in mind a full-day program at age four?

Ms Thornham: Yes.

Mr Neumann: Where parents are both working or where you have single-parent situations where the single parent is working, how would you cover off the hours where there may be a need for care for the child beyond the hours provided in school?

Ms Thornham: That happens in my school at the present time. We have a separate agency that provides care between 7:30 and 6 pm, including lunchtime. It is already in place in some jurisdictions so I do not see that as a big problem. Parents would have the option of having the children in school all day and in addition they

would have care-giving beginning at 7:30 in the morning or whatever suits the community. It happens to be that in mine.

Mr Neumann: Could you tell me a little bit about your association. Perhaps I should know more, but the Ontario Principals' Association, does that represent all principals in both the public and separate or—

Ms Thornham: It is a voluntary organization. Principals in Ontario belong to the teacher federations automatically, so we are kind of an umbrella organization that principals opt to belong to. Our particular focus is professional development and a very important focus also is to give input to policymakers in terms of education. We believe we are important because we are the only group that gives an in-school administrators' perspective into issues. We are very small and we are very poor. We represent probably 800 or 900 principals in the province and those include independent school, secondary—the only criterion is that you are an in-school administrator of any kind of school. So we have a mixed bag, if you like.

Mr Neumann: In terms of early identification of children with special needs where there is development of learning disabilities that may manifest themselves later on or sometimes fairly early on, in the committee, we have been addressing issues going right back to prenatal prevention. Representing the principals and having the perspective of the administrators of the schools, what recommendation would you have in terms of improving on the communication that exists between agencies within the community that may have contact with the child before that child enters school and the school system, and ensuring that whatever identification of a possible problem has occurred is not lost and that the schools get the best information they can to understand the children who are entering the school system?

Ms Thornham: That is a really good question because many of the children who we find are high risk prior to coming to school have multiple-risk factors and so they have been involved with a variety of agencies. Coupled with that, many of them move around a fair bit and so it is very difficult. Of course there are all kinds of confidentiality issues and so on, so we do not get as much information and as much up-to-date information and so on. Basically, much of our issue is around whether or not the parents have given the other agency the right to share the information so it is an issue around freedom of information. It is a difficult question

to answer without addressing also the issues of human rights and all of those things.

Mr Neumann: I understand that.

Ms Thornham: It certainly would be helpful as a principal if there was somebody managing the case who could come to the school at the outset and say to us: "Here is a youngster who is coming in and he has this and this and this. He has been involved with these agencies and here is what we know about him." But as I say, traditionally that does not happen and most of these agencies seem not to talk to each other and so we sometimes find out six months or eight months down the road, or sometimes even longer than that, that in fact there has been some involvement. I do not know how to address that as an educator.

Mr McEvoy: In the Barrie area today what has happened is that a close liaison has developed between the public health people and the early educators, kindergarten teachers, principals, etc., and the process is referred to as preschool screening. During the year, public advertising takes place in the newspaper offering the service to parents if they would like their children to undergo vision, hearing, etc., those kinds of tests.

In the part about the child's development, a history is taken and a positive relation is built between the family and the school nurse. Hopefully, that is a good strong start indicating, say, a family with its first and oldest child, their first contact as parents with the school system, with the health unit, of the team approach and trying to build a level of trust and sharing of information. As Sue said, now added to that process has been the signing of releases to share information and so on. There is a little bit of a team approach happening in the Barrie area.

1110

Mr Neumann: Another area I am interested in is what happens once the children are in the school system with the identification of the special need and the best possible placement for the child in terms of the education, the identification and placement review committee process that exists. Do you feel parents have enough support to work their way through the decision-making that occurs with respect to the children who go through these decision-making experiences?

Ms Thornham: That is another good question, because it is quite complex. It goes on for quite a long time and there are a lot of steps, but of course it is like everything else: there is wide range. Some systems and some schools have

IPRCs that are very sensitive to parents and so on, and others are more steeped in tradition and lots of "experts" spouting off, so it really does depend. Personally, I try and sit down and have parents say, "Look, I do not understand this, that or the other." But I am in an area where we have a very high cell component, and even though you may devote your time you are not entirely sure at the end of it whether or not the major issues are clear to the parent. You try, and when you are using an interpreter, of course you really do not know whether the nuances of the message are going through or not. So it is very difficult to know that.

I think most boards have tried to be very sympathetic to parents. For example, in our own IPRCs now the decisions are made with the parents there so that there is quite an involved dialogue around: what are the options? What does the child need? What is the best playground, and so on? I think most of our parents are fairly comfortable with what is going on, but there is no doubt that you can kind of cloud the waters so that it makes it difficult for them.

Mr Neumann: Some time ago in the Ontario government changes were made to workers' compensation and something was added called the office of the worker adviser to help people who deal with the compensation process to work their way through the system. Do you think something similar to that—parents go in, are on their own, have all these professionals at an IPRC hearing, but there is no one advising them on how to understand the terms, how to make the decision. They are given a form at the end of the hearing that says, "Sign here that you agree with the placement."

Ms Thornham: That is a nice concept.

Mr Neumann: Sure, they can get advice from the teacher and the principal, but maybe they should have some independent advice short of going to a lawyer, which some of them do, but it is very costly.

Ms Thornham: It could be a school board resource.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I certainly hope that is in the amendments.

Ms Thornham: I think that is a good suggestion. I must say that a lot of our parents do come with someone now to an IPRC, such as members of the ACLD committee, the association for children with learning disabilities or whatever, so they are getting more knowledgeable in terms of how to play the system and that is good.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But many of them do not know they have the right to have those people there.

Ms Thornham: That is true.

Mr McEvoy: Our particular set of forms where we invite them has that statement right in it, "You have the right to," etc.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A lot of them do not.

Mr Jackson: I had a principal put a parent on a stopwatch at my board. He put him on a stopwatch and he said, "Time's up." There is some real sensitivity in the IPRCs there.

Ms Thornham: I have never seen such a thing tried in Canada—

Mr McEvoy: No, I have never heard of such a thing.

Ms Thornham: —but I hear what you are saying.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The chair would like to do that here.

The Chair: No, the chair is happy to explore all avenues fairly and equitably.

Just one point of clarification, Mr McEvoy: you mentioned the school nurse. Is it the Simcoe county health unit?

Mr McEvoy: Simcoe county, yes.

The Chair: Do they routinely put a nurse full-time in the school or is it a visiting nurse by the district health unit.

Mr McEvoy: Very much the second, a visiting nurse. In my own building we have about 590 children in kindergarten to grade 8 and that person is in there less than half a day a week.

The Chair: It was just a clarification, because some of us went through the system with a full-time school nurse in the building and we have heard that it is not the normal way of doing things in the province. I just wanted to make sure that was that.

Mr Furlong: I would just like to have you briefly outline how this model works in your school, about the child care before 9 am and after, how it is staffed. Give me a typical day.

Ms Thornham: Okay.

Mr Keyes: There is no such thing in the school field, Allan. You might know that.

Ms Thornham: I am a principal in Peel and we have the Peel lunch and after-school program, which is a separate and private entity. We give them space in the schools, they hire staff and then their mandate is to look after the children outside school hours. Parents may opt to have children in the program any combination of the hours

between 7:30 and nine, during the lunch hour and from 3:30, when our regular school day ends, until 6:30. They pay for that service, so it is an elitist kind of service in terms of parents.

Mr Furlong: So it is provided by the independent agency.

Ms Thornham: That is correct.

Mr Furlong: It is not provided by the school board or the school.

Ms Thornham: No, it is not. But the board is very supportive of the program, obviously. Their offices are in our board office, for example.

Mr Furlong: Are the parents taking advantage of this? Is it a popular program?

Ms Thornham: Yes, I think it is. They have about 25 youngsters, and we have 500 in the school. Lunchtime is not so popular, because of course we provide free supervision at lunchtime. Typically, this program is much more highly subscribed before and after school, but for those parents who really have no other option, it is there and they at least can come to the school, drop the children at 7:30 in the morning, pick them up at 6:30 at night and know that that is where they are and not having to be transported all over the place. But of course that only applies to full-day programs. They do not deal with kindergarten kids at all. If you have a half-day kindergarten child, you are into this business of transporting him or her and so on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: At the moment, in reality, that practical reality of not having class size authorized by the province but being left up to each board, for junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, does that really come down to being a principal's decision rather than a board's decision? In your boards, for instance, is there a range that is permissible for JK-SK and then you try to work out within your own school how best to divide your resources, or is there something more specific than that?

Ms Thornham: It is a recommendation, really. What happens is that I get a staff allocation from the board, and then based on what the needs of the school are and the program priorities and so on, I determine where the staff goes. But within all of that, we have all kinds of recommendations in terms of grades 1 and 2 class sizes, kindergarten and so forth. So there is not a great range, across our system, of class size.

Mr McEvoy: I would just add to that that in our particular situation I think your government does deserve some credit for great leadership in this regard. The financial grants on the 22

pupil-teacher ratio aspect really made dramatic changes in our area, all for the benefit of children, for sure.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In 1 and 2?

Mr McEvoy: Yes.

Mr Jackson: So you were behind in those areas.

Mr McEvoy: But not badly. I think, actually, on a provincial average, we were in about the middle of the province, but we have now moved to a much improved situation. But as it relates to the lot of five-year-olds, it became silly when the government paid good money for grades 1 and 2 to be limited and capped at 22 and did not have kindergarten proportionately lower. Now it is either in the collective agreement or about to go in the collective agreement, but the cap should be 20 at kindergarten. This is a big step forward in our situation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So that actually was bargained.

Mr McEvoy: Yes. I believe right now it is an administrative ruling. If you checked in Simcoe county, you would find that there are no kindergartens that exceed 20 to one. But I believe it is about to become part of the agreement as well. That really moved forward because of this government's impetus on grades 1 and 2.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about grade 3, the rest of the division? We used to try to operate by divisions at one point.

Ms Thornham: My large response is 23 students, and that is between JK and grade 5, so I have been able to keep pretty close to what I feel are reasonable class sizes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We have heard back anecdotally in other areas where boards have used the 1 and 2 reduction, not to put pressure on reducing kindergartens but to add to the class sizes in 6, 7 and 8. I am glad to hear that is not happening in your areas.

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Mr Evoy: Put in a plug for the responsiveness of the Simcoe trustees then.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is your policy at the moment in terms of before the collective agreement comes in, or in Peel's situation, in terms of kindergarten which actually may have more than 20 children? When do you bring in other assistants to that teacher?

Ms Thornham: I have seven kindergartens and they all have a teacher assistant. The largest one is 25 and the smallest one is 16. But that range is because of the physical facilities. Some

of my kindergartens are in small classrooms, regular classrooms, and some are in real kindergartens, so I have made a very deliberate attempt to put the appropriate number of children in the appropriate location.

Mr McEvoy: In the Barrie area we wrestled with that and elected to go the other way. The minute the 21st child enrolls, another class is created, by hook or by crook. It has caused us great grief, but we have tried to be responsive. We use the concept of teaching assistants more to deal with matters of early identification and IPRC-type matters for the needs of an individual child.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It must have had immediate impact on your space problems then in a growing area like Simcoe.

Mr McEvoy: Yes, and the whole question of boundaries is just becoming increasingly complex. It is very difficult to contend with.

The Chair: Barrie is getting to be a large growth area, and therefore you are having a lot of other pressures as, I guess, Peel has sort of gone through a little earlier, and still continues.

Ms Thornham: Yes, exactly.

The Chair: I come from a northern board. I think some of our kindergarten teachers would love to have that extra help and do not get it routinely because of a different way of dealing with it and the class-size issue. I am pleased that somebody is making progress in that ratio situation.

Ms Thornham: Yes, we are very pleased with the strides that we have made collectively in the past couple of years.

The Chair: You are to be commended for your leadership.

Mr Jackson: Actually, Richard was asking questions in the area that I was most interested in. Our board, the Halton board, deals with the same problem on an administrative basis. We have had that since 1975, so we were able to force class splitting. When I was a trustee, the most horrible phone call I ever made was to a school to find out its kindergarten numbers, but we kept a pool of teachers in limbo just for that purpose. But we had an absolute rule: We just would not have a child pierce a certain number. It was a higher number, of course, in those days.

Having now discussed that, can we look at recommendation 10 and could you be a little more specific? We are having some advice which says, "Don't interfere with the collective bargaining process," and yet my attitude is, if we can do it in part of the primary division, why are

we not doing it in all of the primary division? What did you really mean by that?

Ms Thornham: That one was more with reference to as we require additional teachers for these kindergartens. For example, in my school, I have seven kindergartens, which are all half-day programs, so if we go to full-day programs, I need an additional seven teachers. My issue was that the school board still retains the autonomy to hire those seven teachers, whatever processes are in place and whatever collective agreements are in place in each jurisdiction. That would be adhered to because the potential for doing otherwise, I think, really looks pretty horrendous.

Mr Jackson: I am still not clear what you mean. Are you talking about, not that I am aware of any cases, redundancies, where the grade 7 math teacher has a shot at junior kindergarten because the position opens versus the board's autonomy to hire someone who, in its opinion, is more qualified? Is that what you mean by that? Or do you mean that the collective agreement is in concert with provincial guidelines and therefore there is an absolute requirement to hire those additional teachers based on the new enrolment?

Ms Thornham: What I was trying to say there is around the Ministry of Community and Social Services and Ministry of Education business so that, because we are talking now Education, school boards would retain the autonomy to hire teachers for that role, as opposed to—and then there would be some kind of process to bring in the ECE folks to support that program, which might involve the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I did not say that, but that was what I meant.

Mr Jackson: So you would want us to re-examine collective agreements to talk to the hiring of paraprofessionals.

Ms Thornham: No, I am not saying that.

Mr Jackson: Then I am still not clear what you are really saying. From the work I have done on collective agreements, there is program protection, and from that flow certain qualifications. In Barrie, we hear they split the class and get a second teacher. In Halton, they bring in a teacher's aide, with all the support and strength of programs and abilities that we would hope for, but a paraprofessional is still a paraprofessional in terms of collective bargaining.

Ms Thornham: I agree.

Mr Jackson: So that is the area you are concerned about.

Ms Thornham: No. The basic issue here is that we are suggesting that kindergarten should be about 20 children with a qualified teacher and a teacher assistant. The teacher would be hired in an appropriate way, whatever the board deemed to be appropriate, because there are lots of ways these things are generated throughout the province. The ECE person may also be hired in a way that is appropriate for that board, or indeed it may be something that they have to develop because they have not had something like that before. Lots of boards do not use teacher assistants or paraprofessionals or whatever at all.

My intent was to say that what we are not going to do is mess with collective agreements. They are there, and I do not see that as being part of our mandate, if you like.

Mr McEvoy: In other words, somebody could not say, "We can't have four-year-olds in school all day because of teachers' collective agreements." That would not be a rationale for not picking up on the rest of our proposal. The collective agreements, as they are structured now and supported by provincial legislation, allow our proposal to be acted upon.

The Chair: A short supplementary.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One tiny thing that has struck me just all of a sudden is why you have not made a distinction between JK all-day and SK all-day in terms of your numbers. You have a 20-to-1 ratio, but you are saying that you have to move to more of the kind of facility that the child care facility has at the moment in terms of seating places and things like that.

It strikes me there are lessons to be learned from ECE in terms of its numbers, where it is eight to one for that four-year-old child; in fact, for the five-year-old as well. At that level of development, with the hour-and-a-half, two-hour nap taking place and that sort of thing, does it not maybe make sense to differentiate between the JK and SK sizes and that sort of thing? I wonder why you have not gone closer to the ECE model at the moment, or the child care model.

Ms Thornham: I guess part of this is just based on—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Money?

Ms Thornham: On our experience with our JK kids in school now. We are running them roughly comparable to the SK classes in terms of size, and 20 youngsters with two adults seems to be pretty reasonable. We are able to meet their needs. I think the other side of the coin is that if you start to look at a smaller pupil-teacher ratio,

then that has dramatic impact on physical facilities—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Absolutely.

Ms Thornham: —which I do not see our being able to provide. This has significant enough impact, let alone going with a smaller PTR.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation. We appreciate your coming before us.

Mr Neumann: Could I just ask one question? You mentioned the care provision at the end of the day. You mentioned it was a fee-paying proposition. Are parents who perhaps cannot afford the fees not eligible for subsidy in some way?

Ms Thornham: I am sure they are. That is something that happens quite apart from the school, so we put parents in touch with the appropriate folks. I am sure they are, but I am not really conversant with the details.

Mr Neumann: It is just that the word “elitist” was sticking in my mind and I have a concern about it.

Ms Thornham: I think some parents see it that way because they know it is a fee-paying thing, but I am not sure to what extent they are able to get assistance. That is a question I will ask.

1130

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

The next group is the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Laurel Rothman, president, and others. If Laurel will come forward, then she can introduce other members of her delegation. I understand you have a written brief. If you could pass that out so that members can follow it, I would appreciate it. It will help to frame questions while you are speaking.

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

Ms Davis: Actually, I should clarify that. It is not a brief prepared specifically for today. It is a piece that was prepared as an internal working document for our organization.

The Chair: I have got you. I appreciate the clarification. If we can have your notes afterwards for our research people so that we can refer back to them, we would appreciate it as well.

Ms Davis: We have one other piece as background documentation.

The Chair: Good, thank you.

Ms Davis: We heard you were informal—

The Chair: Yes, we are very informal.

Ms Davis: —so we are going to be informal.

The Chair: We are in your hands and the floor is yours. If you could introduce your copresenter, it would be very much appreciated and we can get started. Thank you.

Ms Davis: My name is Janet Davis and I am the vice-president of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Ms Rothman: I am Laurel Rothman, president.

Ms Davis: The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care was established in 1981 as a coalition of provincial organizations that includes the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association—all of the teachers' federations—social service organizations, the Ontario Association for Early Childhood Education, social workers, women's groups and other interested organizations. The organization was established primarily to advocate and lobby to expand and improve the provision of child care services in Ontario, specifically with principles based on the desire to have a universally accessible, publicly funded, nonprofit child care system in Ontario. That has been maintained as our operating objective.

Part of what we have been doing this year, because we have now been established for 10 years, is to re-examine the policies and strategies that we have employed over the last 10 years, and what you have received is essentially a summary of a document which assesses both our strategy and some of our policies. I guess what we really want to do here is to go briefly through some of the background information, and Laurel Rothman will highlight some of the alternatives that we proposed in the discussion paper.

I guess it was pretty disturbing actually, when we looked at the issues of accessibility, affordability, quality, staff salaries and working conditions, that we really have not made any significant improvements in the last 10 years. We still see that only 11 per cent of children who need care are receiving care. Even though the percentage of spaces provided has increased dramatically, the demand has also increased dramatically. The level of subsidy access has remained abysmally low, and only six per cent of preschool children in Ontario receive subsidy, even though 40 per cent really are eligible to receive subsidy, and 70 per cent would be eligible for a full or partial subsidy.

We are concerned that in fact the continued inadequate subsidy has deepened the sort of welfare, user-pay orientation of the child care system. The fees have escalated and, in fact, in most cities now we are looking at fees for preschool programs at \$500 or \$600 a month and infant-toddler programs at \$800 a month. Essentially, child care is now beyond the reach completely of lower-income and middle-income families. With inadequate subsidy levels, we now see that even the poorest are not getting adequate child care. Government initiatives that were intended to provide greater financial assistance to deal with the affordability issue have not occurred, so we are really concerned about the issue of affordability.

Salaries and working conditions have also not improved dramatically. The average salary in Ontario for an early childhood educator working in child care is still about \$17,000 a year, which is probably about half of what a schoolteacher makes. The working hours are longer, the working conditions are worse, they have fewer holidays, fewer benefits, less professional development. Essentially there is greater isolation and they have remained predominantly unorganized in small workplaces.

Essentially, we have real concerns about the staffing issues and the professional opportunities for people working in child care. We also have concerns about quality. The majority of children are still in unregulated baby-sitting situations and we are very concerned about the basic health and safety of the majority of children in Ontario.

Not only are staff underpaid; there are incredible shortages of qualified staff in most centres and many, many centres across the province are not able to meet the legislative requirement for qualified staff. There are huge turnovers in staff. There continues to be inadequate space, equipment and supplies. There are continued breaches of the Day Nurseries Act because of inadequate funding.

The other major concern of our coalition is the continued growth of the commercial sector. We do not believe that child care should be provided as a profit-making enterprise and there should be more action taken to move towards the development of a nonprofit system only.

The other aspect of even the nonprofit system that we have seen grow worse is the whole issue of the complexity of the operation of child care programs. We now have parent boards of directors administering sometimes up to \$500,000 budgets on volunteer time. The regulation from both the municipal level of government

and the provincial government is quite high, so a lot of complex reporting is required. We found more and more that parents, and particularly working parents who have the least amount of time available to them, are finding the responsibility of operating child care in isolation a more and more difficult endeavour.

The parent control we had envisioned as part of an ideal system is really quite illusory when you look at the fact that they really do not have the money to be able to make the kinds of decisions they would like to make, because as you know the salaries are completely dependent upon the fees parents can pay and the levels of support for subsidy.

We would like to stress that we think some of the initiatives that the Liberal government has taken under the New Directions for Child Care policy have been positive. One of the most positive parts of the policy has been the initiatives around school-age child care, and particularly the joint partnership of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In particular, the capital funding for the building of child care facilities in every new school is a very positive move and we applaud that initiative and hope it will be continued.

We also think the placing of child care in vacant space in schools and the encouragement of all school boards to do that is also a positive step, because we do agree that child care in schools is a good thing. Schools are community-based and it is a logical place for children to be, particularly those children who are of JK age and up. However, there are some fundamental problems with that initiative and with the so-called partnership that exists.

Someone has coined the phrase "joint custody," and in fact that is what happens to the child who goes into day care in the morning and then into the school for part of the day and then back into day care. Joint custody can be successful if the partners are equal and have equal resources and equal ability to provide for the child in a similar way. Unfortunately, the partnership between child care and education is not an equal one and there are some fundamental problems with the fact that we have two distinctly different systems dealing with the same child in the same location and it creates an awful lot of problems. While we see the encouragement of co-operation as positive, we think there are some fundamental problems that need to be addressed before that co-operation can be a smooth one.

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Essentially, you have a system where education is universal. It is free. It is available to all children. The staff receive adequate, good salaries. From the child care perspective, they are certainly seen as good salaries and working conditions. The staff is organized into strong local and provincial federations. They work in a system that has a strong and supportive infrastructure. They have consultants. They have labour-management structures to deal with labour relations issues.

They have in-service programs. They have other kinds of departmental support such as library services and instructional media. They have accounting departments and personnel departments, which sounds almost trite but every child care system has its own personnel committee and they have to deal with all the legal, financial and administrative aspects of operating what is almost like a mini-school, while the education system provides all of those kinds of supports in its infrastructure.

Children have the right to special education in education and a right to all of the services that come with that. Right beside it, down the hall, or actually more likely in the basement, you have the child care program, which is underfunded. It is essentially isolated from any larger organization. They operate on their own. It is user-pay or welfare. It is only available to those parents who have an ability to pay, which is a fundamental difference and we see it as incredibly inequitable. It is available to only a few children. The staff are unorganized, underpaid and really have no support from a provincial organization such as the federation. Essentially, as I said, there is no infrastructure.

Ironically, they also do not even have the security of knowing that the space is theirs. They are there in so-called vacant space. They are essentially tenants of the board of education and there are no provisions under the Education Act, even if a board would like to, to provide security for that space. The capacity rating formulas do not acknowledge that child care is in schools and it is fundamentally—I have used that word an awful lot—foolish public policy to be encouraging boards of education to start up child care centres in schools and yet make no provision in legislation to ensure they can remain there.

We have many situations where—Dianne certainly knows. In her riding there are several schools where the population has grown and the child care is sitting in a classroom that has to be recovered by the school to put classes in, to

expand to accommodate the growth and to reduce class size. The dilemma, of course, is that not only is the space not there, but also there is no recognition that capital money should be made available to boards to allow them to renovate and build additions to accommodate child care in that space.

What is most inequitable about the Ministry of Education's initiative is that \$257,000 in capital for elementary schools and \$500,000 and some odd for secondary schools is being given to every board of education that is building a new school. That space will be permanent and exclusively used by child care. It is guaranteed. Currently, all the child care centres sitting in vacant space do not have that guarantee of permanence. The Toronto Board of Education, for instance, has close to 100 child care centres sitting in space that could at some point be required back by the school for educational purposes.

The distinction between education programs and child care programs has to be acknowledged and legislative changes have to be made to recognize that.

Essentially, we have two distinct systems with two different kinds of regulations, two different kinds of funding both in capital and operations, two bureaucracies, different lines of accountability, different staffing requirements and clearly differences in facilities and resources. It inevitably creates differences in status and perceptions. Child care staff who work in programs located in schools will tell you, any one of them, that they feel definitely like second-class citizens in the school. As long as there are two ministries dealing with two jurisdictions in one location, I think that kind of conflict will continue.

Essentially, we have identified these problems and at this point are proposing as an executive to our member organizations a model which Laurel will address. As we have said, it is not policy of the coalition yet, so we are sort of walking in limbo at this point. We cannot definitively say this is the policy of our organization.

The Chair: We heard from a group yesterday that was preparing a report shortly and we were asking if it could be part of our committee's working documents, and they said yes. You are somewhat in the same position. You are not alone in that, so do not feel bad.

Ms Davis: Our organization has early childhood educators and teachers and trade unions. We have a range of groups and diversities and interests.

The Chair: I understand.

Ms Davis: It may take some time. You may not be sitting by the time we get this report.

The Chair: You say it will not be official in a month, then, if I hear you right.

Ms Davis: No.

The Chair: Thank you. Please proceed.

Interjection.

Mr Neumann: Let's hear it before it gets watered down.

Ms Rothman: I want to sort of underline what Janet has said regarding the crisis. I do not want to pass up an opportunity to talk to a number of MPPs about issues that will probably be facing you in the next month, because obviously what we are talking about is an issue now and the impact upon child care of the new all-day kindergartens is quite immediate. I gather that by next fall certainly, a number of boards in some of the larger metropolitan areas will be introducing and expanding all-day kindergarten.

Let me say right now—I guess I will address this mostly to the members of the government party—what you should keep in mind. Something you could do right now is to talk, as we have been doing on numerous occasions, with members of cabinet, especially Mr R. F. Nixon, who probably as we speak will be considering and preparing the next budget.

I would emphasize to you as members with a particular interest—I am assuming because of your role here on this committee—in early childhood education that what you could do right now this week, which would help in both the short term and long term, is to fund a subsidized space for every single eligible child in Ontario who is waiting. By that I mean the province be prepared to kick in its share, which is shared by the municipality and the federal government, for child care subsidies under the Canada assistance plan.

This is an interim solution by all means, and I want to say that clearly, but I really do not want to pass up the opportunity to say to you that we know at least 4,500 children are eligible and waiting in Metropolitan Toronto. There is a large list everywhere from Windsor to Ottawa to Muskoka. The word has got out and many of those children are in early childhood education settings in schools, or would like to be if they could pay for it. So that is my short-term commercial—pardon the pun—expression.

Mr Keyes: At the same time taxes are—

Ms Rothman: We can talk about that later, okay? I did not want to pass that up.

The Chair: Continue, please. Sorry; go ahead.

Ms Rothman: Okay, I will move on. What we are proposing as we move forward, really, is to change what we see as presently a patchwork of services. We have approximately 2,000 licensed child care programs in Ontario, many of which, approximately—I would have to guess now—between 40 and 50 per cent are located in school buildings at this point in time. I have to say that is approximate. I do not have my numbers right in front of me.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is about 900.

1150

Ms Rothman: Okay. What we are proposing is that it is time for preschool children to have access to early childhood education as they need it, as modern Ontario families in the 1990s need it, as a right. We want to move immediately towards a publicly operated child care system in conjunction with the introduction of an extension of early childhood education services for children 3.8 years and older in the education system.

Our executive is proposing, and again I say this is not formal policy but our proposal under discussion, that your government's initiative for expanding kindergarten be extended to provide full-day day care and education, which we will be calling the integrated seamless day, for children 3.8 years to 8 years old, and after-school programs for children 9 to 12 years old within the current education system.

Nonprofit child care programs for children under four, which are vital—we are not forgetting them; we are not leaving them alone—would be expanded and would have to receive increased financial support for delivery through a flexible, neighbourhood hub model. Obviously that is a more complex discussion which probably is not as clearly within the purview of your committee, but is something we are grappling with. I think we are focusing on the children 3.8 and up for purposes of this presentation, while not forgetting the younger children.

We looked at options as to how this publicly operated child care system could be presented. We looked at changing funding arrangements within the Ministry of Community and Social Services. As the result of our current examination to date there was not, shall we say, support for expanding it within Comsoc, basically because it is our understanding that the basic welfare service orientation of most of the programs within that ministry would remain, and that would be an obstacle to promoting child care

as a right for all children who want and need it and their families.

We also looked at establishing a new Ministry of the Young Child, something that was in our founding brief, *Daycare Deadline: 1990*, which has been the subject of much study by many of your staff members over the years. I guess we similarly felt that the option of building a new system with a new bureaucracy had its pros and cons, but in the balance of things it did not seem to be as likely, shall we say, or even possible, in the next few decades.

We looked at the current education system for a number of reasons. Education is already recognized and supported as a right. As we now know from a number of the presentations, educators are both aware of and sensitive to the needs of working parents and the need for quality child care that complements the rest of the educational day.

We know the education infrastructure needs reform, at least from many of our member groups' perspectives, but that starting point, that is, the starting point of a school board, exists in every community across Ontario. It does not depend on the will of parents who may be able to get together a nonprofit parent board to incorporate to start a child care program, who may be able to get some assistance and do that, and would not leave children out in areas where parents are not in a position to initiate that complex process of putting in place child care programs.

The education system is also democratic and publicly accountable on a number of levels. We like to emphasize that it is our perspective that young children, and for purposes of this discussion children from 3.8 up to 12, should have education and child care as a right.

As we look ahead to our next deadline, which we are calling "2001," we have developed a motto in which we would hope the partners would be certainly equal or certainly better resourced and on a more similar footing so that there is a harmonious day for the child. We are recognizing a model in which all children 3.8 to 8 years old based in local schools would be able to receive care. This would improve access and quality for children and would ensure support for families and an opportunity for meaningful parental input.

Let me just ask the question, does anybody here have children under six?

Mr Jackson: A whole bunch.

Ms Rothman: A whole bunch of them. How about under 12? Is anybody a single parent?

Mr Jackson: If I do not get home more often.

Ms Rothman: Okay.

The Chair: My wife thinks she is.

Ms Rothman: Maybe you can listen to these ideas from a number of perspectives or a number of your roles. As I said, the ECE extended day programs, and we are calling it early childhood education, would be universally available with no user fee to all children 3.8 to 8 years of age—those are, of course, the existing kindergarten and primary divisions—during the working hours of 7 or 8 am until 6 pm.

Modifications would have to be made to accommodate local needs. Certainly there would have to be some particular way of dealing with the needs of communities with large numbers of shift workers and seasonal workers. These are important refinements that need to be worked on. Attendance for children under 6, just as it is now, would be optional.

The curriculum would be designed to incorporate the principles of good early childhood education, that is, a play-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, child-centred, promotes nonracist, nonsexist attitudes and behaviour and, of course, emphasizes integration of children with special needs at an early age, probably an earlier age than is now possible. I was interested to hear the previous delegation talk about the difficulty or lack of co-ordination when children with special needs enter the system and that there is not always a good working relationship with community agencies, or often there is no time or resources to forge that relationship.

Group size is essential. Our recommendation is that for the early childhood education classes, the optimum size is 16, with a maximum size not to exceed 20. Maximum ratios for all groups would be one teacher for every 10 children at all times.

Early childhood education programs would be allocated specific space designed to accommodate children 3.8 to 8 years old in activity-based programs. So, for example, we would not necessarily have to have the JK room, the SK room, the grade 1-2 room and the two day care rooms. They all may well be early childhood education program rooms that could be used and shared throughout the day.

That may sound like a very simple thing and you might raise the issue, "Why can't you do it now?" I hope that Janet has explained there are tremendous organizational, territorial and philosophical barriers that exist in some places that make it quite difficult to do that, although there

are obviously some good examples of where it does work. In fact, I hope the committee might want to consider visiting some of the all-day kindergartens that are located not far from Queen's Park that have day care programs down the hall where they have begun to forge a partnership.

All staff working in these early childhood education programs, which, I should emphasize, would be operated by boards of education, must have training in early childhood education. You can imagine that we have had many, many days of discussion over this issue because that means that our OTC-trained teachers would also go back and get ECE, as our ECE teachers may need further training at some point. I am going to deal with that in general terms later.

The work day will be a maximum of seven hours, including breaks and preparation time. You may again wonder about the specificity of this, but I think ECE workers in licensed child care often work seven to eight to nine hours a day, five days a week, 12 months a year, and they are lucky if they have more than two weeks' vacation. Now, at least, they will all have OHIP. Even if the parent board is going to have trouble handling the cost, they will at least have that benefit.

A minimum of three staff would be required for each group of 20 children to fill the full day. We are talking about from 7am until 6 pm. Obviously all children would not attend for that full extended day. We would assume that those who need it would be able and eligible to use it.

The issue of staffing qualifications is a very complex one. It is probably among the most controversial within our member organizations. It is one that we have grappled with a bit and we have come up with three possible staff options. Again, I bring this up in a discussion mode. This is not formal policy yet.

1200

We looked at a nondifferentiated staffing model of three teachers, where all three teachers must have a degree, an Ontario teaching certificate and ECE training and would contribute equally in curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. Obviously, that has tremendous implications for collective bargaining and for financing of programs. It also has tremendously impressive implications for quality of care, consistency and working conditions.

We also looked at a differentiated model of two OTC-trained teachers and one early childhood educator, the educator having of course a degree or diploma in early childhood education,

the teachers with primary responsibility for curriculum planning and implementation with assistance from the early childhood educator. Salaries would be differentiated, reflecting different levels of qualifications and responsibilities.

You might ask, "Is that not what we have now?" I would say that from our preliminary research, the range of teaming of OTC-trained teachers and early childhood educators is very inconsistent across the province. There are some boards that are making it a policy to hire only ECE-trained teachers' assistants to work in kindergartens, but my understanding is that they are in the minority, so it is catch-as-catch-can again for the four-year-old, if you will.

The third model would be a differentiated model where there would be one teacher certified under OTC and two early childhood educators. The teacher and the educators would have the same qualifications as outlined in the second option. The teachers would be in the classroom for what we will call the standard schoolday and the early childhood educators would work early and late shifts. I must say very, very strongly that there is not a lot of support for that model in our organization, I should say among our member groups.

Child care workers, who are early childhood educators with at least two-year community college degrees, do not want to be on the fringe, they do not want to pick up the pieces and only wash paintbrushes and serve snacks. I do want to emphasize that. However, it is a model, one model that has been proposed.

We have been extremely gratified by the support of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario who in fact very much share many of the goals we have for planning for early childhood education and who I know are strongly in support of all kindergarten teachers having training in ECE. I guess what I would say is we would want to ensure that there is recognition of the need for quality planning and education for early childhood educators, just as there is for other kinds of specialists throughout the various levels in the system.

In order to accomplish this, obviously we need to have some significant changes in bridging programs to assist those early childhood educators who wish to get additional training to do that more quickly, with more recognition of their two-year training that they already have undergone. There need to be upgrading opportunities that must be implemented so staff from both fields can move into early childhood education

quite quickly. I should add that there are some very exciting pilot projects happening, one particularly in Thunder Bay, where the board of education and two-year early childhood educators are working closely.

To flesh out the models further, in each local school, there would need to be established a new position, a co-ordinator or vice-principal of early childhood education and out-of-school programs. This person would co-ordinate, for example, for those children coming into the system with a variety of needs and special supports and for older children would also maintain a strong liaison with the parent committee that I am going to describe later and with community child care programs, as I said, for the children under four.

This position would require a background in early childhood education and community development. As well, this model would develop full-day summer programs, which may be operated somewhat differently, but would provide care for children four years and older who wish and need to attend that program, either on that local school premises, or somewhere in the community. I think our goal there is that working families with children under 12 who need assistance in planning child care would have that assistance.

I want to emphasize that we would want to ensure that there are meaningful and significant opportunities across the province for parents to maintain that important input that they have now. While they may not have the input that we idealized around building a wonderful curriculum currently in child care because there are not the resources to provide it, we certainly want to ensure that there are formal channels in which parents can bring their individual concerns; in which ethnocultural communities can raise curriculum issues in the earlier years, as well as all the other specialized needs, be they communities with many shift workers or whatever those specialized needs are.

So parents in this model of the integrated day will have three opportunities to participate in decision-making. One, of course, is the avenue that currently exists, which is the election of trustees for the local board of education. That is an important one, but obviously one that has a fairly long time span and only happens every two or three years.

The second opportunity will be the establishment of a parent committee in each school that works with school staff around staffing, curriculum and allocation of financial resources. There

are some precedents for these kinds of committees. I believe the Toronto board of education among others has, in fact within the collective agreement with the federations, established a committee known as the school staffing committee. That is the kind of thing that could be formalized and directed very specifically at the integrated day program.

Third, each school board would establish a parent council and an early childhood services committee that would report directly to the local board of education. That committee could deal with the very specialized needs of the younger children, anything from how do you accommodate best—I do not know—nutrition, needs for rest, those different kinds of things that people do feel very strongly about, perhaps more strongly in the earlier years than the later years.

Addressing the question that one of the members to my left had earlier, certainly it is our strong position that the current local property tax base, which in most situations is a regressive tax base, currently financing public education to a tremendous degree, especially in the two largest municipalities in this province—both Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa, as we understand it, get virtually zero provincial dollars to provide their current education programs—we urge you to go back and find additional funds which have to come from general revenues to finance the expansion of these ECE services.

We know that is not easy and we know there is concern about the economy softening. We also know that we have just come out of a period of tremendous growth since 1982 with higher provincial revenues than have been seen before. We also know that all of your and everybody else's manpower predictions or needs for human resources in the next 10 to 20 years say that there will not be enough people for jobs and we know that in order for people to enter those jobs in the workforce there must be quality child care. So we think that you have to begin to address those large financial issues in ways that will support families and children who need quality child care.

Let me briefly say something about the out-of-school programs. Children attending the junior division, the children from 9 to 12 years in public systems, need enrichment and recreation programs before school, lunchtime, after school, on professional activity days and on school holidays. We think they should be based in schools, funded from provincial grants for extended day programs—as we understand it, there are few boards that are exercising that option now—co-ordinated by the vice-principal

responsible for early childhood education and out-of-school programs. That is our model for how we think things should be developing both in the short term and in the long term.

I do not want to neglect children under four. Let me try to very briefly say that I believe there is among our membership, and I think probably if you even look at some of the opinion polls in the last couple of years, growing consensus that child care services for children under four also should be fully accessible to those who want and need it.

Our proposal is that they be developed, that they be publicly operated and publicly funded. But as yet we have not resolved by whom and how that should be best done, so in the interim what we are recommending, or I should say considering, is that nonprofit child care programs for children under four should continue to operate under the Day Nurseries Act. They need an infusion of direct funds by increasing the direct operating grant to 30 per cent of operating costs.

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Again, I should not neglect to emphasize an issue that is on your current agenda, I would imagine. They also must receive a pay equity grant to meet the pay equity adjustments that programs are having to post and meet as we speak now. As you probably know, the current direct operating grant for most child care programs covers approximately 10 per cent of expenditures per year. That is a fairly small amount. It is an important step, but I guess what we are saying is that if we are going to, if you will, prop up the sagging child care network at this point in time, it has to have 30 per cent of the operating costs. People cannot pay it out of their pockets any more.

I guess, as I said earlier, the third immediate step that has to be taken, both for the children under four and over four, is to bite the bullet and make the allocations in your current budget so that there will be subsidies for all families who are eligible and waiting for licensed child care in Ontario under the current guidelines of the Canada assistance plan. That certainly would be an immediate step you could take that would help in the interim. I will stop there.

Ms Poole: Thank you for your presentation. It takes me back to the old days. I would like to focus on a couple of different things.

The Chair: You are not even that old.

Ms Poole: I am that old, believe me. Feeling older by the moment.

Janet, you talked about the relationship between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education and, I think, used an excellent analogy of their having joint custody of the child. That engenders all sorts of problems, as it does with real joint custody. Both ministries are obviously operating under different legislation, under different rules, have different training, different staff salaries.

What I am wondering—do you see it as possible to reconcile these two ministries together—and I am talking aside from having a Ministry of the Child—do you see it as possible to reconcile the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act to reconcile the salary differences, the training differences? Is that a feasible plan? Have you developed any guidelines within your coalition to help us address this problem?

Ms Davis: No. Obviously salary differentials could be eliminated. I presume there could be amendments to—

Ms Poole: But only upwards.

Ms Davis: Upwards, right. The kind of regulation under the Day Nurseries Act such as square footage per child, the requirement of fencing and lunches and all these sorts of things that are anomalous, those obviously could be changed, but I do not think it essentially changes the relationship. You will have two distinct jurisdictions dealing with the same child. I do not know how the ministries could co-ordinate around such things as capital funding unless they planned jointly. I cannot see it. And if you are going to bring them together in a way that makes them the same, then why not put them together?

Ms Poole: So you, as well as Laurel, who mentioned the Ministry of the Child, would prefer to go that route?

Ms Davis: The Ministry of the Young Child?

Ms Poole: Yes.

Ms Davis: Personally I do not see that as a reasonable option. The executive examined that possibility and we have decided that it probably is not something that would be at all viable and that particularly, I think, one of the fundamental issues we addressed was the identification of and developing public support around the right to services, that education is seen by the public as a right for children, and that if we are to achieve the goal of universality and a right to care, it has to be in a system that, currently, parents and the public already identify as a system that provides a service for everyone, and that is education.

Essentially, we see the right to education being extended and child care being incorporated as

part of education, because the reality is it has to be dealt with. The female labour force participation rate—the statistics are stunning. Every time we get a new one it is astounding. It just means more and more children are going without care. We have this arbitrary age of six when all of a sudden we say yes, a child has a right to high quality programming, that it is beneficial to society as a whole, and that family income and family status have nothing to do with that child's right to that service. Yet for children under that age, somehow those assumptions are not there.

Ms Poole: Just to be perfectly clear—I know there are probably others who want to ask questions—you are talking about the care and education of a child from 3.8 years onwards being under the Ministry of Education, and prior to that age you are talking about the child still being under the jurisdiction of Comsoc? Is that how you envisage it?

Ms Davis: The issue of the under-fours essentially has not been resolved. We have come to the position that we believe it should be publicly funded and publicly operated and should be a public service. Whether it remains within the domain of Community and Social Services or whether it as well goes under Education we have not resolved yet. There are lots of pros and cons for where it should go. I should stress there is real concern about splitting the age groups. It is one of the concerns we have heard expressed most strongly by early childhood educators, that it would be an abandoning of the children under four and we do not want that to happen, so we still have that to resolve.

Ms Rothman: I want to make a couple of comments around, could we strengthen and resource the existing patchwork? If we look back at what has happened since the introduction of a number of different kinds of funding—since it actually started with, I guess, the initiatives program in 1980 or 1981—and if we look back at the fact that we are still only serving 11 per cent of the population in licensed care—we have evidence through waiting lists and other kinds of recording mechanisms that many, many more people want and need licensed care—there is no infrastructure there to expand, no matter how much money you have, in addition to the attitudinal and philosophical perception that education is a right, which is something we feel the public supports very strongly.

I do not think you could do it in a practical vein, because right now of these 2,000 programs, I would say 70 to 75 per cent are small, individual, almost like cottage industries with

less than 10 employees. So they continually reinvent the wheel.

Ms Davis: There is recognition and there is certainly consensus in the organization about the problem. Further financing and centralizing and providing infrastructures: there is agreement that would improve it. But there is also the recognition that the more you centralize and provide support services such as financial, legal, administrative, all of those kinds of things, and centralize under one umbrella so that there is a possibility to have one large employer and therefore the ability to have collective bargaining units, the more you build that kind of structure, you are going to build a bureaucracy anyway.

It is going to have to be administered by larger and larger internal structures anyway, whether it is through the municipalities—we have municipalities that directly operate services now that have grown and developed into large bureaucracies anyway. Early childhood educators see child care as education. Early childhood educators have fought for years to be given recognition for the kind of program they provide.

1220

The Chair: A couple of things: I think some of the threads we have heard, some of the deliberations dealt with an amount of evidence that is fairly recent in developmental kinds of things that young children need, and I think it has only been anecdotal. Everybody felt they knew that was what was happening, until fairly recently when the studies started to formalize some of this stuff. I think that is one of the difficulties you have. All people are in that situation. If the family size is one or two young children, you never have the parents staying long enough in the system, as if you are in education—you are always there because you are always going through it. So you only have a very narrow slice of that time and that attention and then it is gone. I see you nodding so I guess you somewhat agree.

I think that when the government said it was starting with this initiative in grades 1 and 2, the rest would have to follow once they saw there was more formal information coming in about the studies that are showing this. This committee has heard quite a bit about the need for early identification and special education, the kinds of things that I do not think anybody has really wrestled with until fairly recently. I am just making a comment on it.

Ms Davis: I should say that one thing we did not emphasize was the concern of our organizations for the implementation of full-day kinder-

garten without looking at all at or addressing at all the implications for child care programs. Full-time job opportunities would reduce dramatically. There is the kind of impact it would have on space in schools. All of those things have not been addressed. They really definitely need to be addressed before full-day kindergarten can be implemented.

Ms Rothman: I would urge you actually to look around at some of the models. Both Janet and I have children who attend a school in Dianne Poole's riding. In our school-age day care program, we have struggled to have jobs that are not one hour in the morning and two or three hours after school, because you cannot get good people and you cannot keep them. Every year everybody turns over. This year we could barely hold on to our licence at the beginning. This is north Toronto and salaries are as good as anybody's child care salaries, which are not very good, and parents are squeezing to pay out of their pockets. Kids still need care. People do not want their kids alone and they should not be alone.

Ms Davis: One other thing: speaking of staff salaries, once pay equity has been implemented in the broader public sector—as you know, child care has been excluded by the act—we will see dramatic increases in the salaries of educational assistants. We are absolutely convinced that we will see a massive exit of early childhood educators out of the child care system once the educational assistants receive their adjustments. It will devastate an already understaffed system.

Mr Neumann: Our time is limited and you have presented such a full and complete presentation in so many areas and brought a lot of thoughts together. Perhaps I should concentrate my questions on questions of clarification because we could go into some detail.

When you say 3.8 to 12, we had some presentations that suggested that the entrance to the school system be staggered and that not everyone have to start in September, that a person could start on his fourth birthday, on his fifth birthday or whatever, and that they be brought in. Are there any thoughts on that from your association? Have you looked at that at all?

Ms Rothman: I guess I would look at it from a family viewpoint and I think, probably, that lots of families' calendars, if you will, revolve around school calendars. If you had a child who had entered grade 2 and then you had a child who turned four in December, what would you do from September to December? We do not think that developmentally there is any reason not to

leave it the way it is as long as it is properly staffed and resourced.

If you look at it from a parents' support viewpoint, if there is any kind of choice or if they are in any kind of seasonal employment, you look at September to June and sometimes July and August. Child care needs may be somewhat different. I would argue that for the family with one child who is turning four and eligible for JK and an older child in primary junior division, it would be more difficult if you had it flex and kids entered at different points in time.

Mr Neumann: Another issue is that I can understand your presentation and your support for universal accessibility. However, the school system has something else called compulsory education, which goes from 6 to 16. Do you take a position on that at all?

Ms Davis: Yes. Essentially it would be that the age of compulsory attendance would remain the same.

Mr Neumann: It would remain at six.

You said you had some presentations that are immediate in this year's budget. Have you done a cost analysis?

Ms Rothman: We think your finance staff is quite capable of doing that. We have met with at least four cabinet ministers on this. We are part of the pay equity lobby. We did a constituency based lobby last April and you will be hearing from us. We are doing a constituency based lobby in March. I guess what we really have to say to you, very candidly, is that if you want to show that child care is an issue, which you have talked about from election to election, you had better act now because things are sagging and we do not want you to think your agenda has been completed in terms of child care.

The immediate stuff is, put your bang for your buck under the Canada assistance plan now for every kid who is eligible.

Ms Davis: Second, and I will leave a copy, we made recommendations in response to the Ministry of Education draft policy paper on child care. We think that the capital funding of the ministry for new schools should be extended, but also increased to provide capital funding to existing schools to allow them to expand and add on additions to provide exclusively designated space for child care. It is a very inequitable program right now where only new schools get the funding.

We think additional funds should be made available from the Ministry of Education, in much the way funding was made available for

affirmative action advisers, directly to boards of education to enable them to hire child care co-ordinators or consultants to help in the development of child care in schools and to provide other kinds of services and support for boards of directors.

Currently, boards of education are undertaking these kinds of activities but it is not legitimized by either cost-sharing or funding from the ministry or in fact any kind of legislative ability for them to do that, such as providing free occupancy cost for child care. Supposedly they are to recover those costs from the tenants. On the one hand the Ministry of Education is encouraging boards to give nominal cost or free occupancy, yet they cannot under the Education Act.

I think those kinds of discrepancies in policy need to be clarified. I think also that amendments to the Education Act should be made to allow boards to provide direct and indirect support for child care.

Mr Neumann: We have a standing committee of the Legislature called the standing committee on finance and economic affairs that holds prebudget consultation. Did you make a presentation to them?

Ms Rothman: We did not make an oral presentation this year. We did submit a written presentation and we have in the past made oral presentations.

Mr Neumann: Are there organizations equivalent to what you do in other provinces that you

co-ordinate with on these issues? Are there provinces ahead of Ontario on these issues?

Ms Rothman: Ahead is a difficult thing to judge.

Ms Davis: Ahead is a difficult word.

Ms Rothman: We are ahead in a lot of other ways, right? I think we could say that there clearly has been an increase in spending over the last five years. On the other hand, there has been a tremendous increase in need, and as I have said we have had a very highly fueled economy.

Ms Davis: Ontario has shown incredible leadership.

Mr Neumann: The short answer is no, then.

Ms Davis: No, I think Ontario has shown incredible leadership in developing new policy. New Directions for Child Care, with its fundamental policy statement of developing child care as a basic public service, is probably unique in Canada. I do not think there is a commitment that explicit and strong.

Ms Rothman: In writing.

Ms Davis: I also think that the introduction of the direct operating grants was very positive, although that does exist in other provinces and has been there for some time.

Mr Neumann: Thank you. I could go on, but I will not.

The Chair: Thank you very much and thank you for a thought-provoking presentation.

The committee recessed at 1230.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1414 in committee room 1.

The Chair: We will call the meeting to order. Our first guests are from the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, my old friends from OMSSA. I used to be very active in that organization at one time as a chairman of the Sudbury and District Social Services Administration Board. Brenda Patterson and Sarah Kramer, the floor is yours and you can get started. I know there will be questions after your presentation.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Ms Patterson: Just for your information, I am Brenda Patterson and I am a member of the child care committee of OMSSA, and Sarah Kramer, who is with me, is OMSSA's policy analyst.

We would like to thank you for allowing OMSSA to come and present the association's comments and philosophy with respect to early childhood education as the first stage of lifelong learning. We know that you have been hearing from a number of groups and we do not want to reiterate some of the things you have already heard, but we wanted to give you OMSSA's perspective.

We think it is probably particularly relevant and timely to be discussing lifelong education, given that 1990 has been named the Year of Literacy by the United Nations. In fact in November 1989 the United Nations passed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We were particularly gratified to note that one of the articles speaks to the right of the child to quality care.

Also of interest to us was that the Prime Minister has called to establish a national task force to review the entire education system, which we view as being a very positive step as well. The province has clearly indicated its commitment to ensuring that Ontario citizens are trained and productive and effective in competing in a global economy.

For those of you who are not familiar with OMSSA and what it stands for, it is the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. In fact it is a committee of the association that is presenting today, ie, the child care committee.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association is a voluntary nonprofit organization, the main purpose of which is to influence and

enhance the quality of social services in Ontario. The committee is made up of a board of directors and its mandate is as follows: We essentially review and research and comment on policy matters concerning child care. We promote and try to develop a network of municipal child care administrators and other interested groups to distribute information and to promote exchange of information among people who are concerned about child care. We also try to promote a progressive attitude towards municipal child care with respect to child care administration as well as the clients we serve.

As you are probably aware, municipalities in Ontario currently have responsibility not only for funding of child care, but for planning and delivering of child care services both to subsidized families and to full-fee-paying parents. In providing these roles, municipalities play a significant leadership role with respect to their communities. They also are involved in providing leadership around staff training, integrating children with special needs and providing a basis for research into both child care and programming.

A number of municipalities represented by OMSSA commit considerable expertise and financial resources to community development as well, both in supporting nonprofit child care and in providing public education and advocacy about child care issues.

The OMSSA child care committee represents municipal child care administrators who are responsible specifically for the administration of needs-tested, subsidized child care spaces. In addition, many of them provide direct operation of child care services in group centres as well as licensed private home day care agencies.

OMSSA is involved with a network of over 90 municipal child care directors who are responsible for administering that needs test and purchase service from community organizations as well as providing the service directly. There are some 202 child care centres directly operated by 70 municipalities in Ontario, and 20 municipal private home day care agencies which serve about 5,000 children in licensed private home day care.

Going on to some of the key principles that OMSSA sees in terms of child care and the provision of early childhood education experiences, we clearly see child care as a child-centred developmental service and serving the best

interests of children has to be of paramount importance to child care providers. We see child care not as a custodial service, not as a place to drop your kids, but clearly as a developmental program that allows children to develop to their full potential and recognizes their abilities and their skills. The goal in any child care program should be to provide a stimulating and appropriate environment which is secure, one where the child feels comfortable and is able to explore his own potential.

It is very important to recognize that with young children you cannot separate or compartmentalize their lives into education and care giving, that every opportunity to care for young children is an opportunity for them to learn, and that children do not see their lives in the early years as being, "Somebody looking after my physical needs and somebody teaching me things." We see that children experience their world by acting on it. They develop in stages at their own pace, but they develop through a series of stages that follow in a set pattern.

1420

One of the things I think we need to make clear to you as well is why we see early childhood education taking place in child care. Over the years the demand for child care services has allowed early childhood educators to conduct a number of research projects and a lot of academic research in looking at the effect of early learning experience on children. The findings have led us to a new understanding of the importance of the early years of life. Consequently, child care has come to be viewed not as a custodial service but as a developmental service.

When we look at child care from this child-centred perspective, we can argue that the high quality of child care experience can be beneficial to any child, regardless of income level.

In the last 15 years we have seen a number of studies that have shown high-quality child care has been an effective form of primary prevention for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the Transitions report the Social Assistance Review Committee clearly recognized the need for high-quality child care experiences to provide an opportunity for those kids who are in receipt of social assistance to have opportunities for healthy development and productive and meaningful adult lives.

Research has clearly indicated to us that early childhood education or quality child care has facilitated learning and development through those early years. It has been an effective form of

primary prevention and early intervention for young kids who come from disadvantaged environments or high-risk environments.

We also see research findings which clearly indicate that children who are involved in high-quality child care programs improve their verbal abilities, their language development. It often is associated with higher intelligence quotient scores for kids from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds who stay in early childhood programs, as compared to children who are home-reared.

The results from kids in disadvantaged backgrounds who attend school and have been in early childhood programs indicate that they drop out less often, are less likely to need remedial education later in life and are also less likely to end up on welfare.

If we go from sort of the qualitative aspects to the cost aspects, it is also clearly far less expensive to prevent long-term problems associated with impoverished childhood than to fix them. Child care is certainly cost-effective when we compare it to remedial programs.

In a recent US study that has been endorsed by the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, it was reported that every dollar spent on child care saves five times that amount in later education and employment programs. From the local taxpayers' point of view, delivering early childhood education through a quality child care program is less expensive than delivering it through the education system.

For example, some numbers that were derived from the Metro experience were that if you were to look at the care of a child in junior kindergarten in an education system that is based on 184 days of school, the cost is \$7.75 an hour. That same child in a child care program would cost you \$2.80 an hour. Just out of interest's sake, a junior kindergarten program would have a ratio of perhaps one teacher to 20 children, perhaps with an assistant, but an early childhood program would have a requirement of having three staff to that same 20 children.

What do we consider to be high-quality child care? Ontario has a licensed program of child care programs—I am sure you are familiar with that—which is provided either in centres or in private home day care arrangements through licensed agencies and serves children essentially from infancy to the age of 13. This program also provides care for children who have special needs, physical, emotional and developmental.

We have some fairly clear results from the research that tell us what high-quality child care

is. One of the critical ones is essentially what the training, the stability and the continuity of teaching staff is. We certainly know that other groups have covered this subject for you, so we have additional policy documents which, if you are interested, could be made available to you.

With respect to qualification and training, OMSSA clearly believes that child development theory and the application of that theory is the core skill-set that is required, and that is generally earned through an early childhood program in Ontario.

The emphasis continues to be on early childhood education development, and we feel some concern that a bachelor of education and primary education is certainly not the appropriate training for early childhood educators who might be responsible for children—infants, toddlers and young preschoolers. It is clear to OMSSA members that providing small children with stimulating experiences in a secure environment for an entire day demands from the staff qualitatively different skills from those required of a teacher who provides teaching to children directly for six hours of the day.

In terms of lifelong learning from an early childhood perspective, we also see the need for that at a staff level as well. In the early childhood field we need to ensure that there is ongoing in-service training for our child care professionals, and they need to keep current with the rapidly changing research field.

We have for the last few years experienced a great deal of difficulty in recruiting and maintaining qualified staff which has in the end impinged on the quality of care. Some of the factors that have influenced that have been the fact that oftentimes these jobs are not seen as very valuable; they are seen as something that anyone could do. The compensation level in child care centres has not always been what we would like it to be. In many localities, in many child care programs, the staff see themselves as subsidizing the cost of child care through their low salaries. Although the provincial direct operating grant to child care programs has helped to address that, it has clearly not dealt with the entire problem and that remains of concern to OMSSA.

With respect to the kinds of experiences young children have when they are involved in both child care and the education system, we have a considerable concern with regard to the continuity and the number of care givers that young children often go through. This speaks to the notion of all-day kindergarten children whose parents are working and may leave the home

before their child can actually go to the local child care program, so they may have some older child deliver their child to the program. They are cared for in their before school program, then they go off to junior kindergarten, are picked up and taken to their half-day program in the day care centre, and then eventually brought home.

The numbers of people who are responsible for that child during the day create a lot of unnecessary stress and difficulty for those young kids and we are concerned about the problem and the difficulty of continuity of care for those kids.

One of the other factors in terms of quality child care is clearly the kind of program and the content of that program. I have talked to you previously about the need for having a stimulating and developmentally appropriate program for children that is essentially provided in a warm and secure environment.

Most quality child care programs have a planned program for the children that should provide for the child to be an active learner. We see the teacher quite clearly as someone who facilitates that learning, not as somebody who teaches the children particular things but who in fact allows the child to learn those things by providing an environment which effectively encourages him to explore.

Again, it is very difficult to separate care giving or caring for children from education at this age. If you think about children who are doing things like climbing the stairs, perhaps holding on to your hand, they can learn all kinds of things just in that simple experience of climbing the stairs. They learn language opportunities because you are chatting. They perhaps learn numbers because you are counting the stairs. Simple tasks like putting away toys allow children to sort and learn some of the cognitive skills.

Another critical factor to the quality of child care is group size and the ratio. It has been shown to be a critical determinant in terms of the quality of care. Having an adequate number of staff for children—and the younger the child the more he needs to have adult attention—ensures that they get some individual attention. It is very important for young children at this age to feel attached to the people who look after them. They need to feel a sense of trust with the person who is looking after them, and if they do not have that feeling of trust they will not learn. They will be so busy being concerned about their security and their emotional security that they will not be freed up to do that learning.

1430

In addition, the size of group could be particularly hard for young children. Under the Day Nurseries Act, group sizes are mandated in early childhood programs, but it is not enough sometimes to have adequate numbers of teachers if in fact the group size is so large that a child can still get lost in a large group of kids.

Again, OMSSA is raising the concern that in junior kindergarten programs you may find one teacher with 20 children, up to maybe a double-sized kindergarten class with up to 40 children in some of those settings, as opposed to often times 16 to a maximum of 24 kids in a child care program with three staff.

Finally, one of the other critical components of quality child care is parental involvement. In the child care field there has been an ongoing and evolving realization that parental involvement in education experiences of young children is critical to children's future development.

We believe that the partnership between education and professionals in the education field and families has to start very young. Child care programs have a variety of methods of involving parents and the need is there to make sure that those methods are flexible and address the needs of the parents as well as the needs of the organization.

Not every parent has the same ability to come out to evening sessions, or the same level of interest or energy, and there needs to be some way of allowing each parent to participate in his or her own way. You will find parents involved on parent boards and advisory committees in a more formal way. You will also find parents involved in parent-teacher interviews and information sessions that child care programs may run, and involved as well informally through regular communication between the staff in the child care program and the parents, at the end of the day.

We also see that the physical plant or the space in which child care takes place is important as well. The space needs to address the issues of enough space for the number of children as well as being able to be a secure space for young kids.

Having said all that, I guess we now need to talk about what it is that OMSSA particularly sees as being critical issues for the future. OMSSA's primary goal is to have child care recognized as the public service that it is and to work to improve accessibility and affordability and ensure quality. What we need in order to do that is political will and financial commitment. The importance of providing accessible, afford-

able, high-quality child care to all who require it must be recognized on the political agendas of both the federal government and the provincial government if we are going to ensure a quality child care program system that works for all.

It is of concern to us that at the last federal election the proposed Child Care Act disappeared and has not yet re-emerged in some form. Although the Canada assistance plan currently is the method for funding, it certainly is outdated because it continues to tie child care subsidy to a welfare program rather than a public service program. Although there were concerns about the proposed child care legislation, the consultations had not allowed for a resolution of some of those issues. So we look forward to some federal leadership in this area.

At the provincial level, child care has been a stated priority since New Directions For Child Care was released in 1987, and we have seen several initiatives that have served to move the child care system forward. The introduction of direct operating grants has certainly been a major thrust and support. There have been numerous research projects and increased numbers of subsidies available for municipalities. However, we certainly look to see a firm commitment to the future of licensed child care as the primary provider of early childhood education.

OMSSA has expressed concerns with regard to the Premier's announcement around senior and junior kindergarten as full-day programs in terms of them offering child care options. It is flattering and supportive of teachers in the elementary school system to recognize the importance of those early childhood years, but we were concerned that the announcement totally neglected to mention the fact that early childhood educators have been concerned with those critical early childhood years for many, many years.

The other kinds of things we are concerned about in terms of provincial directives have been some of the things that support informal, unlicensed child care. The recent program announced in the social assistance support to employment program, which allows social assistance recipients to deduct the cost of their child care from their earnings in determining social assistance, is of concern because in some municipalities like Metropolitan Toronto it clearly allows you to buy informal child care only; it does not give licensed care as an option. In the end, it also encourages people to buy informal child care because they will in fact have more dollars available to them at the end of the month.

Financial recognition is required to guarantee and recognize continued improvement and quality. There needs to be adequate compensation for trained staff, including the cost of pay equity. The higher costs associated with programming for infants and toddlers—because they certainly require larger numbers of staff—and also the higher costs associated with providing care for special-needs kids need to be recognized in the costs of child care. We also need to ensure that the real costs of operation are recognized in the agreements between the province and the municipalities.

At the local level, we continue to see a number of municipalities demonstrating leadership in the field through their directly operated programs in providing a role model for the private sector by providing high-quality programs, by using innovative staff training programs and by providing adequate compensation levels to their staff.

We also see a lot of municipalities facilitating community development and public awareness around the issues of child care, and we look to see them continue to do that. We see municipalities also playing a lead role in the planning and the development of the local child care system to ensure that it meets the needs of their residents, and continuing to devote funds and support to assisting families to find high-quality programs.

OMSSA is committed to advocating continued and expanded local leadership, to supporting municipalities as they attempt to improve and enhance their child care systems within their communities. We are convinced that in order to ensure a stable and productive future for the province of Ontario, all three levels of government must work together with parents to ensure that the process is well planned, that it is adequately funded, that the care is of high quality and that the system is comprehensive and meets the needs of families.

We are anxious to include the education system as a partner and to build upon the experience that we have in the municipal sector with school-based child care programs. We certainly applaud the Ministry of Education in its four pilot projects which look at integrating child care programs and kindergarten curriculum and we support the Ministry of Education's commitment to the development of child care centres in new schools.

At the same time, however, we are fearful of the impact that the Premier's junior and senior full day kindergarten announcement will have on the continued availability of vacant school space for child care. We have numerous child care

programs that are currently existing in unutilized school space.

We are also concerned that a system that is already desperately short of trained early childhood educators may lose more as they move to the education system as teachers' aides. While we recognize that this is an indirect way of addressing the poor salaries in the child care field for trained professionals and that it affords early childhood educators another career path, the use of trained ECEs in school settings is an issue that we would like to discuss further with the Ministry of Education.

By suggesting a more balanced partnership, we appreciate the opportunities that the system provides to children and staff alike, but we would like the education institutions to recognize and to use to advantage the wealth of experiences possessed by the child care system in meeting the educational needs of very young children. For decades, we have been helping children and families make the transition from one system to the other and we believe that the two systems have a lot to learn from one another. Working together can truly make education a lifelong pursuit starting in the early and most formative years.

I would like to thank you for your interest and the paper that goes along with this will be available to your staff on Friday and will include a number of references to OMSSA documents which we would be happy to make available to you if you would like to receive copies.

The Chair: Thank you so much. We have a number of people who wish to ask questions of you.

1440

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will start off with a factual thing. You mentioned four pilot projects for curriculum of the child care centre and the kindergarten as being melded.

Ms Patterson: I would have to get the information specifically about the projects, but I think there were four separate projects that looked at a variety of ways in which a child care centre that probably was coexisting in an education setting could work with the school in terms of staff training and a number of issues.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I notice from the nod from Julie Mathien that we can get some information.

Ms Patterson: Julie can talk about it a great deal more than I can.

The Chair: We were not sure, though, what the reference was to the pilot projects, whether it

was identified that way, and maybe that is why we did not catch it right away.

Mr R. F. Johnston: We will look back to Julie there. So those are the ones she was alluding to in her opening remarks.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Great, okay. Thank you for your comments. They are very useful.

There are a couple things I would draw attention to. I think it is really dangerous to draw cost comparisons with child care versus kindergarten, especially when you then knock down some of your own straw men afterwards in terms of the fact that many people in the child care system think they are subsidizing that system at the moment and that the costs we are seeing are not real costs at all, in terms of those who are involved there; as well as the need for superstructure, of course, which is often brought into education finance, which is not this apparent in terms of the backdrop to the ECE.

That being said, I understand the desire to get the comparatives out there; I am just not sure that there are not more oranges and tangelos at least, if not apples and oranges.

Ms Patterson: Yes, and I think the intent is to say that, in fact, putting kids at that age in an education system as a full-day experience is probably not the most appropriate method of caring for those youngsters.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I guess that is what I want to take up with you, because it strikes me that the movement in society, at least in this province at the moment, is towards four- and five-year-olds being in the school system more, for whatever reasons. That is where things seem to be going at this stage. You did not approach this directly head on, but a group that was just in before you, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, was putting forward the position—somewhat tentatively, because I do not think it has been passed by all their membership as yet—or the notion that the four- and five-year-olds should basically become part of the education system and that the education system should be reformed for class size reasons, etc, to meet their needs better than it does presently; but the child under 3.8 years old should be dealt with in the other Comsoc-driven system or part of the Ministry of the Child perhaps, but under a separate formula from that which would be in the schools.

It seems to be logical at this stage to start to look at that kind of grouping rather than the way we have it presently.

Ms Patterson: I think one of the concerns to address that is that we do not have a system like that right now, so it is hard for us to respond to what it might look like currently. But the problem is that a four- and five-year-old in an all-day junior or senior kindergarten does not get rid of the child care dilemma for parents. In fact, sometimes it worsens it, because it can sometimes be more difficult to find the care for before school, lunch and after school than it is to find full-day child care.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was being unfair to them in that sense. They were talking about the full, seamless day from preschool right through. So there would be one dropoff centre to deal with your concern that you raised around the multitude of care givers in a given day.

Ms Patterson: Of care givers that a child may have. I guess the other issue still is around the training, the philosophy and orientation of the people who work with young kids, because we still see those four- and five-year-old children as being in those early and formative years and needing someone who has a background in ECE and development to be able to address their needs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I accept that totally, and I think we have heard a lot of evidence that in fact there needs to be some beefing-up of the requirements in the faculties if we want to make any major reforms in this area at all. But it does strike me that in organizational terms, from your organization's perspective, maybe it is time to think about dividing up the child care pie, if I can put it that way, a little differently from the way it is being divided up at the moment, and focusing more of the municipally run nonprofit sector's efforts on the toddlers up to what will be the school-age child of the next decade. I just put that out to you.

One of the things I would like to ask you about, because you mentioned it, is the notion of program being important, but in point of fact, of all the things in Comsoc, the one thing that is mostly missing is programmatic requirements. Curriculum-style notions are not as strong. What is strong is class size, the physical space and that kind of thing, but it is not as strong in terms of the notions of what program is, and the program can vary enormously within even the nonprofit sector, let alone within the private and the nonprofit sectors.

Ms Patterson: Certainly from a day nurseries requirement basis, there are some indicators of what things need to be involved. Some municipalities have taken greater strides than others in

establishing criteria for what clearly needs to be in a quality child care program, both through their own directly operated programs and perhaps through their requirements with purchase of service, because how many staff there are is important but it is only one of the factors, and what you do with the kids is essentially one of the critical determinants about whether or not that is going to be a good experience for those young children and facilitate their learning and development.

Mr R. F. Johnston: And what is your experience with the training of the ECE workers? We seem to be getting a fair amount of evidence that, depending on where they went to school, they might have received quite a different emphasis in terms of the number of courses they get in development and curriculum versus other kinds of things; the amount of practicum might be quite substantially different, etc.

Ms Patterson: One of the difficulties is that certainly the field has expanded tremendously over the last 10 to 15 years. I think community colleges are running in lots of ways to catch up with the changes, and I think that is where in-service training programs have to address some of these things. If people have come out of their training at different points in their lives, they have experience that perhaps supplements that and helps them, but we also need to address it in terms of the in-service training and the lifelong learning that we provide.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Where are things at in terms of the municipal sector at this stage in terms of growth? I am not really clear on that. I mean, I know of some of the arguments that are happening in Metro and a couple of the other centres, but I am not clear about whether the percentage of municipally run centres is increasing or decreasing versus the private nonprofit sector. Do you know what I mean? Are the hard numbers increasing much?

Ms Patterson: Percentage-wise I am not absolutely certain.

Ms Kramer: Most municipalities have, over the past few years, tried to maintain their percentage within the local communities in terms of the public, directly operated programs versus nonprofit private and private commercial. Recently it has been a provincial unstated directive to put a moratorium on municipally directly operated centres, so in fact that percentage has decreased, but that has only been in the last year or so. Proportionately, it has not outrun the others.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Nice of you to say that. I appreciate that. I agree with you in terms of the policy direction.

Mr Neumann: If I could just clarify that last point, you said there is a direction—

Ms Kramer: Unstated.

Mr Neumann: —an unstated direction to put a cap on the municipally operated, but that does not mean to put a cap on the nonprofit versus private.

Ms Kramer: No. In fact, the opposite. They are, to our understanding, trying to expand the nonprofit private sector. While there has been an expansion in the municipal public sector over the last few years, the intent is not to expand that any further and to focus attention on nonprofit. That is our association's understanding of the current direction.

Mr Neumann: I have been asking questions related to the communication networking that goes on between agencies and the school system at the point of entry for children in terms of identification of children at risk. Has your association addressed that issue, and do you have any recommendations on how one can improve the information that a kindergarten teacher or a principal might have at the point of entry in terms of evaluating special needs of children? We have had some evidence that the information is lost or it is not transferred or there is a problem with respect to right to privacy. Is this an issue you are addressing, and do you have a policy paper on it?

1450

Ms Patterson: We have not addressed it in a formal way. I think it is a fairly critical issue and I think you find a variety of methods within municipalities, and really varying, based on the local school and the child care program, as to how effectively they do that. It certainly increases in its complexity with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the need to address all of those factors, but I think it is a critical one and I am sure that, along with the kinds of information that come out of the pilot projects from the Ministry of Education, some suggestions and guidelines at OMSSA in terms of how we would encourage municipalities to address the issue will be coming forward.

Mr Neumann: When you talked about in-service training and the training of early childhood education workers through the day care system at municipal level, what training is being given to assist people who work in the field to identify children who may need to be referred for testing or who may need to be considered for

special assistance in some way? I know that there are the obvious tests that are done, hearing and vision and so on, but I am thinking more in terms of the people who may at a later stage be identified as learning-disabled. If we catch them earlier, we might be able to make a big difference in that child's life.

Ms Patterson: Depending on the kind of programs that are run, if, for example, the program is an integrated program and has access to some of the resources that support children who have special needs, the centres may or may not have greater amounts of sort of formal testing materials available to them. The early childhood education training as such certainly helps people to recognize the broadest range of so-called normal development and helps the teacher to recognize when she needs to be concerned and to address that.

I think each of the municipalities may have a variety of training programs. Some of them have sort of early identification programs that they might look at, and others speak specifically to age groupings and give their staff specific training on that. I think you would find that for the most part it varies in terms of the kinds of supports that they have, based on the communities that they work in and the kinds of needs they are addressing.

Mr Neumann: Would you say that today the majority of municipal councils in Ontario recognize the positive value of the day care program? Has the situation improved over the last 10 years?

Ms Patterson: Yes, I think so.

Mr Neumann: It is a more accepted part of the—

Ms Patterson: Yes. I think the kinds of commitments that municipalities are making oftentimes, in terms of agreeing to fund and to support and increase when, to me, a direct—again, this is not an OMSSA position as much as it is my response to your question, but I think the fact that municipalities have picked up, where there was opportunity to increase their service, is a degree of commitment. I think we still have a long way to go in all levels, frankly, but we are moving in the right direction, or have been.

Mr Neumann: I know that in these discussions we have often talked about the two ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the two systems, but we have not specifically stated at the local level you have to look to

separately elected local systems, the educational system of two or more boards—

Ms Patterson: Yes.

Mr Neumann:—and then we have the municipal system, which evaluates the need for subsidy through the welfare department. Is there growing communication between the two local systems?

Ms Patterson: Yes, I think very much so. You will find, I am sure, depending on the size of the municipality, that may or may not be taking place. Certainly OMSSA responded to the Ministry of Education's partnership initiatives and discussion about child care. We can make that policy paper available to you, if you would like that as well.

Mr Neumann: Thank you.

Ms Kramer: We do note that concern, that need for communication at the local level. As well as the increasing Ministry of Education and Ministry of Community and Social Services communications, the school board and the municipality need to make a real effort to do that as well.

The Chair: Thank you very much. One question: I was reminded that you had mentioned studies dealing with programs where kids should be in socioeconomic—I think your word was "deprived" areas, that it made a dramatic difference. We have heard some evidence that there is not a discernible difference. Perhaps if you could give to this committee some of the studies you are referring to, we would be pleased to—

Ms Kramer: We have a list of them. The references are included.

The Chair: Yes. If you have the references, that is great.

Ms Kramer: It will be included in the background document.

The Chair: You might highlight those for us, please. Thank you very much for a very fine presentation. We appreciate it.

Ms Kramer: Thank you.

The Chair: We are going to recess for about five or so minutes so that we can set up the overhead for the next presentation. We will reconvene at three o'clock.

The committee recessed at 1455.

1506

The Chair: I will call the committee to order. We have from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, child care branch, Kay Eas-

tham, director, Paul Siemens and Patricia Baynham from the ministry. The floor is yours

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms Eastham: Good afternoon. We thought we would make this presentation in terms of a general overview of how the current child care system in the province operates, how it is funded, the size, etc, and focus a little bit in on some of the recent trends with regard to school-based school-aged child care. Then we will identify some of the issues that we are becoming aware of through our joint consultation with the Ministry of Education, and perhaps finish by trying to put some of the issues and developments here in context with some other child-care-related developments.

I know that you have already received some presentations that have touched on the question of the relationship between education and child care, so I hope this presentation is not too general for you, and certainly we would be glad to provide more detailed information as follow-up.

The licensed child care system in Ontario is provided from birth to up to 12 years of age. However, the extension to 12 years of age is a relatively new development—it was part of the New Directions for Child Care announcement in 1987—so usually most child care programs operate for children up to 10 years.

Licensed care is provided in two forms: centre-based care, which is the form of care that I guess is the one we are most familiar with, but also another sector of the licensed or supervised child care system is the private home day care model, and this is a situation whereby the ministry licenses an agency that then supervises providers who provide care in their own home. This is an attractive form of child care for many parents. As well as offering some flexibility for infant care, it also is being used a fair extent for after-school care as well.

1510

Looking back at the centres, while most centres provide full day care in terms of the full day, one thing that people should be aware of is that a high proportion of the programs that we license are half-day nursery programs. I think it is important to recognize that the history of child care does not just derive from the need for day care to free people up for training and employment. Part of the history of child care in this province comes from the co-operative child care movement.

Interjection.

Ms Eastham: I am sorry, I thought that was a question.

While traditional day care might have been viewed as a sort of convenience, a service and support to the parents, there always has been that strand in child care of the child-oriented, early childhood development in the nursery school programs.

We are also involved in supporting community-based services that are not licensed, and particularly in recent years we have witnessed a significant growth of what we call resource centres, which provide a variety of services in the local community, such as toy libraries, drop-in programs and outreach to parents, and also to unsupervised care givers, as well as registries of unsupervised care givers. The resource centre program was one of our main ways of providing both outreach and support to the unlicensed or informal sector, as well as consumer education for those parents who use that sector.

We are also involved, ourselves and with community partners, in community development, basically child care, particularly in areas that are currently underserved, and with regard to general public education to promote a better understanding of what constitutes quality child care.

Child care services are provided by a variety of auspices and we recognize in our work three main groupings: Municipalities and Indian bands may be involved in the direct provision of services; the nonprofit sector; and the commercial or the for-profit sector.

To supplement the overhead that you have here, it is interesting to note that the direct municipal involvement is relatively small. They only account for 10 per cent of the total capacity in the licensed child care system. As actual providers of child care, they are not large players. Their main involvement is with regard to subsidy administration, which we will get into later.

The nonprofit sector makes up over half of the system now. It accounts for 55 per cent of capacity and the commercial sector accounts now for 35 per cent of capacity.

It is interesting to note that the commercial sector's share of the total system of capacity has reduced over the last two years from 39 per cent in 1987. The cause of this is that the actual capacity in the commercial sector is pretty well straight-lined. They have not declined, but they have not grown either, whereas the growth that

we have been witnessing over the last few years has been in the nonprofit sector.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services' role in child care is partly the mandatory role of licensing and enforcement of all child care programs. We also have a significant relationship to the system, and I think it should be noted, in that there are two main types of funding the ministry is involved in. The traditional funding stream would be in the form of subsidies for low-income users in the form of fee subsidies, and in the past, that was basically the extent of the government's involvement in funding child care. Increasingly, we are also looking at another funding stream whereby we fund the system itself directly, and there has been particular growth in that form of funding.

In terms of the softer types of supports that the ministry provides to the child care system, our area offices are involved with the local community groups and local community partners in planning and development and co-ordination of local services and also with regard to either providing or supporting public education around child care.

One of the features of child care funding is its complexity, partly because it has, I guess, grown over time. Certainly one of the things we hope to be able to do is to take a more general look at funding of child care with a view to perhaps rationalizing it. But looking at the main funding categories we now have, capital assistance is available in two forms. Major capital for new buildings and major renovations—generally, that funding is provided on an 80-20 cost-sharing basis. We are also involved in a fair amount of what we call discretionary capital funding, which would be for minor renovations and for equipment, toys, those types of projects. The 1989-90 budget for major capital was \$21 million.

We now have a new funding category called the program development fund, which has both a local and a provincial component. The area offices are involved in a variety of types of funding under this category: operational startup funding for new or expanding programs, assisting with community development, public education and a variety of special projects such as projects to assist with the integration of special-needs children. This is also the fund out of which we fund resource centres. The 1989-90 budget for the program development fund is \$26 million, and about half of that goes in the form of base funding to resource centres.

Also in the branch we have a small provincial program development fund that is used to fund

provincial projects such as major research, public education, the development of flexible model pilots and funding of projects mounted by provincial organizations.

The relatively new type of funding that we have been involved in for the last two to three years coming out of New Directions is the ongoing operating funding that we provide to all licensed services through the direct operating grants. The 1989-90 budget for this was over \$60 million.

Mr Keyes: Sixteen or 60?

Ms Eastham: Sixty million, or \$62 million to be more exact.

Unlike the program development funding, which is discretionary and on a project basis, all nonprofit licensed programs qualify for this automatically. The amount is based on a formula that reflects the staffing of the program, and the priority attached to the grant is to be a supplement to the salaries of child care workers, both as a means of ensuring better salaries for them and also as a means of attempting to reduce high turnover in the early childhood education profession, which obviously affects the quality of care in the centres.

We have included a category of parent fees here, because one thing that I think needs to be noted is that the prime payers for child care services are parents. It is roughly estimated that about 60 per cent of the revenue for child care services comes from the full-fee-paying parents. Government subsidies, direct and otherwise, would account for about 40 per cent of the revenue for child care programs, which is why they also engage in a fair amount of fund-raising.

As I indicated, traditionally our main source of funding child care has been somewhat indirect in the form of fee subsidies to families in financial need. It is still the largest share of our expenditure on child care. The 1989-90 budget for fee subsidies was \$227 million, which represents 68 per cent of our total expenditures on child care. I think what is interesting is that is a reduced share compared to the share that fee subsidies used to make up of funding. In the past, fee subsidies would have been in the region of 90 per cent of all provincial expenditures on child care.

1520

The way the fee subsidies flow is that rather than going to the families themselves, they are paid directly to either the child care centre or the private home day care agency. Rather than being administered directly by the province, they are administered by the municipalities or Indian

bands or, particularly in those areas of the province where the municipality chooses not to or cannot administer subsidy, we work through what we call approved corporations.

Part of the fee subsidy budget would be specialized fee subsidies to support two ministry initiatives. One would be baby-sitting allowances and/or regular subsidies to support with retraining and the employment initiatives of the ministry, and the other would be subsidies to support the integration of handicapped children in child care settings.

Another relatively new source of funding to support child care needs is not part of our branch budget. It is administered by the income maintenance branch of this ministry and is part of the government's response to the Transitions report. The members of the committee may be familiar with the new supports to employment program. Within this program there is no outright allowance or subsidy provided for child care, but the way it is administered, it recognizes the child care cost of people on general welfare assistance and that is discounted before calculating what supplementary welfare is needed to top up their earnings.

In terms of the cost-sharing arrangements on child care, child care funding is shared three ways between the federal, provincial and municipal governments under the Canada assistance plan in the ratios of 50-30-20. So as far as the municipalities are concerned, the funding is 80-20.

With regard to the new direct operating grants program, we are in the process of negotiating federal cost-sharing for grants that go to the nonprofit sector, but we are not able to obtain cost-sharing for the grants going to the commercial sector.

We have no cost-sharing for our capital expenditures or our program development fund. That is not covered by the present federal cost-sharing arrangements. These STEP expenditures on child care are also shared under the Canada assistance plan, but under the GWA program as opposed to the child care program.

The service statistics that we have outlined on the next overhead are as of March 1989. We now have close to 3,000 licensed child care facilities in the province, which reflects a considerable growth over the last three to five years.

In terms of the capacity of that system, we are looking at about 120,000 children enrolled in group centres, plus an additional 10,000 children enrolled in private home day care agencies. So roughly, the system is serving about 130,000

children at this point in time. That includes 88 private home day care agencies.

In terms of fee subsidies, we are looking at approximately 45,000 subsidized spaces.

You can see from the table of expenditures from 1985 to this fiscal year that there have been considerable increases in provincial expenditures on child care. If you look at 1987-88 as the first year of New Directions, you will see that the acceleration in funding clearly coincided with the first planning cycle of New Directions.

That constitutes the overview piece of our presentation. We also wanted to focus in more with regard to the partnership between our ministry and the Ministry of Education. The partnership was announced in New Directions for Child Care in 1987. The intent was to increase the amount of school-age child care by including purpose-built space in all new schools and encouraging the use of vacant space in existing schools, and at the same time to improve co-ordination between child care programs and schools.

Just to review some of the activities since that partnership was announced, we know that, either in construction or planned, we are looking at 200 new child care centres being built in all new schools between 1988 and 1993, which will create 6,000 new spaces. At the same time, in the existing schools we are looking at, on average, about 1,000 new spaces coming on board each year.

Shortly after the announcement of New Directions, there was a joint ministerial statement elaborating on the partnership and the policy involved, which was issued in March 1988. The staff of both ministries have been involved in issuing a series of question-and-answer-type materials to respond to the types of questions that have come from the child care community and from the school boards that are involved in these initiatives.

A joint provincial consultation was held in the fall of 1988 with regard to school-based child care and the report of that consultation was released last December. I think members will have received this as part of their package of materials.

We are currently jointly working on a handbook with regard to school and child care collaboration. Both ministries are involved in research and funding of pilots relating to school-age child care.

When we first announced the school-age, school-based initiative, we were quite surprised when we checked our statistics and found that

even then there was quite a strong precedent of using vacant school space to provide community child care programs, but that precedent has really taken off to the point where now just over a quarter of all child care is provided in school settings. So the school is becoming our most common mode or location for the provision of child care services.

It should be noted that not all of that enrolment is of school-age children, although a lot of the growth is to complement school enrolment in kindergarten and the early grades. But a fair amount of that enrolment is with younger children as well. That would be accounted for where schools provide a general child care service to the community that happens to be based in a school, and increasingly, too, we are seeing the need for preschool and infant care to support continuing education programs and to support the continuation of young parents to complete their schooling.

You will see too in this next overhead that the trend over the past few years shows, in that in 1987, 23 per cent of all centre enrolment was based in the schools. As indicated by the previous slide, that proportion has now increased to nearly 26 per cent. That is because the relative growth rate in school-based enrolment is higher than the growth rate in total centre enrolment.

This next slide is basically another way of looking at the same trend, looking at numbers of centres as opposed to enrolment. Out of the 2,800-odd centres that exist in the province, nearly 900 of them are school-based centres, and at the time of announcing New Directions, I think the number was more like 700. So there has been a significant growth in this regard.

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The next slide deals with some of the operations, perhaps, hopefully, shorter-term issues, that have been identified as we have moved forward on this partnership. Our purpose in presenting these issues to you today is simply that of issue identification. It is not the case that either ministry has developed a formal position with regard to these issues. We are, through our consultation and the issuance of our report, just trying to redevelop an inventory of the issues that we need to jointly resolve.

In terms of some of the barriers that are caused by our various governing pieces of legislation, one issue is the question of security of tenure for child care programs that are located in vacant school space. This is not seen as an issue for the new school initiative, where their sort of permanent access to that space is assured, but it is

an issue for child care programs using space that is surplus to educational requirements at the moment. But in space-competitive situations, child care tenants feel quite vulnerable.

There is some concern that the standards of the Day Nurseries Act, which were primarily developed for younger children, may be too inflexible and perhaps too rigid or too intrusive with regard to older children. Also, they just may not be in sync with the types of standards that obtain under the Education Act.

There is the question that the school boards themselves are raising with regard to their mandate and role vis-à-vis child care. An example of this would be the extent to which it is permitted for them to assist in kind, if you will, with regard to rent maintenance and caretaking costs. The boards are probably arranged along a continuum of how much they want to jump in there and get very directly involved and even operate the child care programs as opposed to those that have a more stand-off reaction.

In terms of the funding of issues, the capital funding for child care programs in new schools is extremely popular and has raised questions from those boards that are not experiencing growth and therefore are not qualified for new schools. It has raised an equity issue in terms that they too would like to access capital funding, whether it be from the Ministry of Education or our ministry, to be able to also increase school-based child care programs.

There is concern on the part of the school boards that there may be some hidden costs up front or long-term costs in getting involved in child care. There are some administrative red tape types of issues around co-ordinating funding when it is coming from two separate bureaucracies. So the fact that a new school gets an automatic capital grant to build a child care centre does not necessarily mean it gets a sort of semiautomatic grant from our ministry in terms of the startup operating program development funding. They need to get that off the ground. Certainly one of the things coming through loud and clear in the consultations we had was the need to co-ordinate that funding role.

The next two funding points are actually fairly related in that, clearly, for those high schools looking at providing child care to support student parents, those parents are almost bound to need fee subsidies. That raises the whole question of the municipal involvement in school-based and school-age child care and the extent to which that is a local municipal priority, engaging them in joint planning in terms of location of services,

who is going to run those services and what the priorities are in terms of fee subsidies.

In terms of the sort of staffing issues we have identified, there is already in child care a serious shortage of qualified early childhood education staff, and that shortage is particularly acute in the larger urban areas, but it is beginning to be felt across the province. My sense is that the primary education sector is also experiencing a similar shortage. So both ministries may in fact be competing for the same scarce resource.

As well as some of the supply issues in terms of numbers, there is also a question of the age appropriateness of the training for people working with school-aged children. Most community colleges, in their ECE programs, have tended to focus on programming that is appropriate for pre-school-aged children, which may be frankly boring to your average nine-year-old. So there is a need to perhaps broaden the training or take perhaps a more interdisciplinary approach around the programming needs for older children.

Finally, but certainly by no means least, are the significant pay and status differentials between ECEs and kindergarten teachers, which clearly become more visible when you actually put those people into the same building and they are actually seeing each other's programming and interacting and comparing those issues.

As the previous slide dealt more with some of the pressing operational, administrative issues, this is looking at some of the longer-term considerations and the impact of the expansion of kindergarten programming. I think this is clearly an initiative that has a lot of positive potential, but members should be aware that many people out in the child care community do have concerns that this may in fact compete with their programs. Whether that is a real or an imaginary concern has to be seen. They are concerned that there may be closures of existing centres or at least a redirection of those centres towards targeting a younger age group than the kindergarten age group.

Earlier I referred to the question of security of tenure for school-based programs that are using vacant space and that clearly the expansion of kindergarten programs is going to place an additional pressure on that space. That has been expressed to us as a concern.

There is the whole question of how best to staff before-school and after-school programs and the kinds of quality issues that raises. One of the terms that I guess we are hearing more of is the concept of a seamless day, which is really the

objective I think all early childhood educators, from whichever discipline, would share. There is the need to promote an integrated day from the child's point of view and to try to look at this in terms of what best meets the needs of the child as opposed to our sort of bureaucratic niceties.

There could be a considerable impact from adopting a seamless-day approach in the existing child care system. It would raise questions in terms of the training requirements to promote better integration of child care under school programming. It clearly raises jurisdictional questions. It may require some legislative changes. Here again there are concerns with regard to quality.

One example here is that there is a significant difference between the ratios under the Day Nurseries Act and the kind of teacher-student ratios experienced in most kindergarten programs and whether there is some kind of split-the-difference ratio here or what, but clearly ratios do have a significant impact on quality.

1540

In conclusion, we just want to refer to some contextual considerations or developments which may influence the longer-term strategies. One is that, coming out of New Directions for Child Care, we are committed to mounting a comprehensive review of the existing Day Nurseries Act and the development of new child care legislation. Some of the initial planning and research has got under way on that and we are looking at that being a major activity over the next three years.

Clearly, that also will raise the whole question of what would be appropriate jurisdictions and standards for school-age programming. Parallel to that legislative review, we are also planning to mount a more comprehensive review of the child care funding arrangements over the next three years, so hopefully we can take a more rational approach to some of the funding issues in the child care area.

Since the release of New Directions, we have had a project that has been looking at the human resource planning and training implications of an expanded child care system. As I mentioned earlier, there are both quantity issues and quality issues here. While that initiative is primarily looking at the training needs for the system as a whole, regardless of location and age, it clearly too will raise and surface some of the training issues in this regard.

Reaching conclusion is a significant initiative that will affect the child care system is the imminent release of the report from the Provin-

cial-Municipal Social Services Review Committee, which may alter the role of municipalities and change both the role relationships and the funding relationships in the area of child care. I think we need to make sure—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Is this a leak?

Ms Eastham: No, no.

Interjection.

Mr Eastham: Unfortunately, it is not. Obviously, it could be very significant. We do not know.

Interjections.

The Chair: Could we get back on track here?

Ms Eastham: The other initiative that our ministry is taking a lead role in, although as with child care we have partnerships with Education and other ministries, is the Better Beginnings, Better Futures initiative, which is taking a long-term look at primary prevention, particularly looking at services which provide integration between different systems, such as the transition from child care to school. This complements the overall prevention strategy of our ministry. Certainly child care has significant preventive potential in terms of special servicing, but even something as simple as the geographic area that you place your child care service in, in terms of whether it is located in a high-risk neighbourhood, can have preventive implications.

The other government initiative that relates to child care is the Premier's Council on Health Strategy. They recently indicated that one of their key themes will be to develop a strategy around healthy child development, and clearly child care fits into those initiatives.

I would just like to conclude by saying that thanks to the good efforts of our colleagues in the Ministry of Education and also school boards and the child care community, given that this is a relatively new partnership, we feel we are doing a reasonably good job of co-ordinating two separate service systems. I think one of the longer-term issues facing us is whether we can continue to operate separately or whether there are more integrated approaches, both from an organizational and from a user point of view, that would ensure that seamless day from the child's point of view.

The Chair: Your presentation has spurred a lot of interest in the form of questions and I appreciate the fact.

Ms Poole: Thank you for your presentation today. It has been very helpful in answering some questions and opening up yet others. I would like to give a special welcome to Paul Siemens who

had the misfortune many, many years ago in a galaxy far, far away of being my boss. I am not sure if he has recuperated yet, but I certainly commend you for still having him with—what is it now—the child care branch. It was child welfare at the time. He certainly was one of the foreleaders in the area and was talking about goals and objectives and reporting mechanisms far before anybody else.

I would like to take a look at the funding issue, or at least at certain parts of it. On page 3, I think it was, for capital assistance you said there was \$21 million in major capital in the past fiscal year. Is that from both Comsoc and Education, or is it simply—

Ms Eastham: No, that is strictly our ministry's capital funding. The capital funding for the new school initiative is completely separate and comes out of the Ministry of Education's capital fund.

Ms Poole: My understanding for the last fiscal year is that Metro got an allocation of \$1 million in major capital, which to my reckoning, which may or may not be accurate, is somewhere around five per cent or slightly under.

Ms Eastham: Do you mean the municipality of Metro Toronto or—

Ms Poole: That is right, which includes funding for child care in existing schools and day care centres.

Ms Eastham: That is not necessarily surprising if you go back to the other statistic in terms of relatively few municipalities are that involved in direct delivery. Even Metro, while it is the largest direct delivery system, is still a relatively small proportion of the total service network in the metropolitan area.

Ms Poole: Do you have any idea of what the total allocation to Metro would have been for the last fiscal year?

Ms Eastham: I would not know in terms of the capital allocations, but we could check that out for you.

Ms Poole: That certainly is something that has been of ongoing concern to people in Metro, an idea, whether perceived or real, that funding was flowing outside the Metro area in a far greater capacity than within Metro. So I would appreciate getting that information.

Mr Neumann: It is about time.

Ms Poole: I was afraid that would generate that type of—

The other issue I want to raise in the funding area relates to your mention, on page 10, of the

security of tenure for child care programs located in schools. This has been a very deep concern, particularly for well-established communities, not only in Metro but, I think, in other parts of Ontario where we have an increasing enrolment in the education system and where day care has been very vulnerable. It has become apparent that there is some discrimination, there is some problem with the equity when you look at the new schools initiative by the Ministry of Education and the fact that we have nothing comparable for our old schools. In fact, they are lined up 10 deep trying to get this type of funding. Do you see a revisitation of that issue and is it a priority for Comsoc to try to work something out in that area?

Ms Eastham: Certainly the community consultation which both ministries mounted back in 1988 confirmed that this vulnerability was identified or confirmed as an issue, and the recommendation came from the school boards that they be allowed to remove child care space from the pupil loading formula. Certainly we have communicated that concern to the Ministry of Education. My impression is that they are open to continuing to attempt to address that issue while respecting the other educational pressures on space in the boards.

Ms Poole: When the Ministry of Education people were here I did not sense that willingness to revisit the issue. I do not know if Mr Johnston is agreeing or disagreeing.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No, I am agreeing with you.

Ms Poole: Well, that is a first.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think we should mark it down.

Interjection: Hansard has it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is in Hansard? All right.

1550

Ms Poole: This is something that I would encourage you to pursue as a policy initiative, to try to resolve that, because we are having a severe problem in our established schools and it is going to be even worse. I was at a school last night which had an enrolment of 325 in the 1985-86 fiscal, and projected for 1990-91 is 640. The day care, of course, is the vulnerable aspect. It is the third school I have been in in the last two weeks where this is happening, so it is going to be a crisis if we do not look at it in the very near future.

The last thing on the funding issue was your comment that it is time, perhaps, that we look at

funding with a view to rationalization. I think, you have mentioned this in one of your latter pages; yes, point 2 on page 12, "Review of child care funding and subsidy arrangements." Do you have anything specific to offer from this particular area. For instance, is there a committee set up right now that is looking at this? What plans do you have?

Ms Eastham: No, that project is not as advanced as the legislation review, but it will be similar to the legislation review in that rather than fix up some of the little things around funding—and we could spend a lot of time doing that—it will be an attempt to sit back and take a more comprehensive strategic look at the overall funding arrangements and raise such questions as, if we are spending over \$300 million on child care, are we putting it in the most cost-effective places and are there better ways we could allocate our funding? Clearly those types of questions will be asked in consultation with the other players in the system.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thanks very much, Kay, and it is nice to see you again. I thought that you would refer back to the standing committee on social development about the direct operating grants and the impact of Dianne Poole's presentation to us, at that time, as to why we move in this direction rather than to some later ministry initiative that came after that.

Ms Poole: Just ignore him.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I also want to say that one other gratuitous comment is that the major role I see for the municipalities in all this in the past has not been their numbers but the standards they have set for pay and for the unionization of workers. That is one of the reasons I regret so much the government not continuing to give them priority in terms of development of that sector.

There are a bunch of incidental issues, but I want to come back to the one Dianne has been spending a lot of time on, rightfully, and this is the security of tenure thing. There were a couple of things that did not jibe with me. One was that you said that you were projecting through 1,000 new spaces a year in existing stock, forgetting the six—

Ms Eastham: No. For vacant school space, it is a—

Mr R. F. Johnston: To project that—I am confused about this, how we project ahead 1,000 increase when we have many instances, like the one Dianne is talking about, and we do not now know the impacts of JK-SK, propagandizing that

that is taking place? Why is there that presumption is what I want to know.

Ms Eastham: That is the actual growth experience in 1987-89.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I thought you were talking about it as being presumed to carry on.

Ms Eastham: I did suggest that one could be anticipating similar levels, but yes, I perhaps should have qualified that in terms of on the assumption that there is still some capacity in the system to respond to that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Have you been able to do any factoring on it, because at the moment how can we know? I do not know how we would know.

Ms Eastham: I think there has been some reduction in our earlier forecasting on that.

Ms Baynham: Yes, we have projections from our area offices in terms of the things they see down the road. Whether they actually materialize, you know, is always a question of the development in the community, but there are still lots of areas in the province, fortunately, where the space crunch is not as severe. I think the JK-SK initiative is going to impact here, for sure.

Mr R. F. Johnston: High schools maybe?

Mr Neumann: Probably at the high school level there is more.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again if you look at the numbers that are in high schools I doubt that is the spot. Given the stats, the breakdown between the high school sector and the elementary panel, I am sure the bulk of the day cares are in the elementary panel at this stage.

Mr Baynham: Yes, at this stage.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One would presume that is where the growth has been, but that would be interesting to see and be very helpful for family studies and other things if that did take place.

I guess this committee is really going to have to look at some directive to the Ministry of Education about protecting the day cares while money for JK extension is given, and if there are SK implications that we cannot lose the day care that goes along with it, because the stats that jumped up at me that you gave us—there has been enormous growth. One would admit that, but when you look at the number of students in JK and SK in the province and then you look at your stats on page 7 about the number of kids age four and five who are in school-based day care—and those are numbers of individual children as I understand it—you have 3,374 in the junior

kindergarten essentially, age four, out of 86,000 students in the system who are in a half-day junior kindergarten, and 2,696 age five out of 130,000 that are in the system. So, if you think of the basic need and for the integration of the services and the need for support of child care for those kids, we are an awful long way from meeting those needs.

There is another figure of 884 school-based centres in total that you mentioned. Then, again, you just compare that against the number of elementary panel schools in the province. Say, compared with what the other programs are in group day care within the system, what is the percentage for the total number of schools that that reflects?

Ms Baynham: I think there are about 4,000 elementary schools.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I see some real questions of public policy there for us to deal with. It cannot just be left to the whole notion of the extension to new schools.

Can you deal with something for me that has been troubling me a little bit the last couple of days? I cannot remember from when we changed the standards, back when, but what was the presumption of our eight-to-one and ten-to-one ratios for child care when the standards were changed? I am thinking about this now as we look at child care in the school and some people are talking about sixteen-to-one, fifteen-to-one, studies showing in the United States of effective schooling for this age of kid, and yet we have an eight-to-one or ten-to-one ratio within the custodial support of the nurturing kind of thing that we have in the child care system. What was the presumption for those numbers? Can you remember?

Ms Eastham: I do not go back that far.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Of course not. Only a few of us are that grizzled.

Ms Eastham: But my understanding is that those ratios were based on the current research available at that time supporting the relationship between ratios and quality service.

Mr R. F. Johnston: American equivalents, as I recall.

Ms Eastham: Primarily American studies, yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think it is kind of interesting that we are now getting these studies which say that a pedagogical difference can be shown at 15 or 20, but especially at 15. Sixteen seems to be an interesting cutoff for children learning on a very similar basis in terms of the

creative play kinds of concepts that we are talking about here, and yet we have these two different bases. I just wanted to know, because I think we are going to have to deal with that, how we are going to rationalize whatever class size we talk about, if we are going to talk about class size and the integration of the two programs. I agree with what you are basically doing with the changes.

Ms Eastham: I think that is the most significant difference in standards between the two systems.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I really appreciate your raising that student fee subsidy issue, which has not really been raised a lot. We really do need to deal with that, and the impact on the funding of day cares in the child care centres, the secondary schools and the municipal role. I think that does raise a lot of good questions for us.

A couple of things which were not dealt with and I just wanted to ask you about; one is, what is the policy in the ministry at the moment around funding of unilingual French centres? We are hearing a lot about the concern in the French community about this bilingual centre being one of the major forms of assimilation in the province.

Ms Eastham: The ministry has funded a major community development initiative in the francophone community to help identify and articulate the needs in that community. We do already fund several unilingual francophone programs. In total, there are 62 French language child care centres in the province, of which 29 are located in schools. We certainly respect the need of the francophone community to have separate services to protect language and culture retention. Certainly it has been part of the policy direction around the new school initiative. The assumption is that the language of the school-based child care will be the language of the school.

1600

Mr R. F. Johnston: So there are 62 unilingual French?

Ms Eastham: Yes. I know some of the debate is around whether bilingual programming is acceptable. I gather there are very few programs that claim to be bilingual, and they are somewhat different. You can have a bilingual program, which from an administrative point of view is really two separate programs. They are very clearly separate. It is really set up that way perhaps just because it is a small community, the numbers do not warrant completely separate, and

it is really just the administration that is common. I think it is recognized that more loose bilingual arrangements do tend to sort of deteriorate over time, but I think you can, where it is appropriate, set up bilingual services that protect the interests of the francophone community.

Mr R. F. Johnston: An issue that has been interesting me for a while now has been the role of child care and play in terms of heritage language and the multicultural side of things. Where are we at in terms of specialized child care centres in terms of some of the ethnic communities, bilingual Greek-English child care and things like that? Are they extant or are they sort of rare?

Ms Eastham: To the extent that community-based programs reflect their communities, there are and may be programs. While they may not be called the Italian child care program, they are located say in an Italian area, have Italian-speaking staff and the parent board is primarily representing the Italian community, for example. In terms of policy, we would not discourage that, neither would we specially fund it in terms of promoting it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So it is a very passive kind of role.

Ms Eastham: Yes. More generally though, we are engaged in some initiatives to promote cultural sensitivity in child care programs in terms of a multicultural approach in all services.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes, that is good.

Two other small things. They are not small, I suppose, but they are short questions. You mentioned—nobody else has talked about it and we really need to think about it—the resource centres which were started off with some fanfare, and some confusion as well, a number of years ago in terms of who was responsible for them. I was delighted to see it being said that they will still be part of the mandate of day nursery schools.

I am starting to hear things from that community, which has reflected a great deal of concern there. I am hearing that things are flat-lined, that in fact there has been some pressure on some of these groups to disappear, that there is such a range of programs provided. Some people have been telling some of these groups, for instance, that they are providing services to the mothers and not providing services to the kids and therefore it should not be dealt with under day nurseries. There are some very interesting messages going out there to the folks who have these very good programs,

whether they are toy libraries or whatever. I wonder if you can tell us what is happening. Where are the budget and other considerations at the moment?

Ms Eastham: New Directions did provide for additional funding for the resource centre program both in terms of enriched funding for existing resource centres and funding to develop new ones. By and large, province-wide, we have met those objectives. I think the feedback you are getting is probably reflecting a fairly tight situation in the Metropolitan Toronto area, whereas there have been some very positive developments in that regard, particularly in rural areas. They are seen as a very effective way of meeting parents' and care givers' needs in outlying areas. But I agree with you that it is an area of some confusion in terms of how directive the government intends to be in terms of what services they should provide.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again, if we look at the figures, the number of children in group centres has increased, but the percentage of children who are out there being served in one way or another, who are in the group centres, has not really changed a great deal. Therefore, a lot of people are in need of some extra support and relief and stimulation for the children, etc., at the resource centres. I worry that if we are expanding them again in rural areas or smaller communities at the expense of existing programs in the metropolitan areas, where we know still only 11 per cent of the children are being served in these group centres, then we are making a major policy mistake. We had better make sure that does not happen. That is what I am hearing you say may be the tendency with a tight regional budget in Metro at the moment.

The other thing is this question keeps coming up over CAP and the interpretation of CAP, and that if CAP were fully interpreted in Ontario then in fact huge numbers of people could be subsidized who are not being subsidized presently, either partially or totally. Can you explain to the committee how that works? Who is it who is interpreting the Canada assistance plan in such a niggardly fashion that only such a small percentage of people can be assisted?

Mr Keyes: You had better strike that from the record.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am sorry. It is true though—the figures we were given this morning—that a huge percentage of people presently using the system and paying, as some of us are, \$300 or more every two weeks to our day care centres; many of those people could be covered by

subsidy, who are not now. Where is the interpretative power here? Is it stuck in the Ministry of Community and Social Services?

Ms Eastham: CAP is a broad-brush enabling piece of legislation and it does leave the interpretation and takeup to the provinces. I think the issue of interpretation is a provincial one. I think when people compare the different means of access to child care subsidies, comparing Ontario with other provinces, one thing that they are struck by is that in other provinces that have an income tax as the eligibility screen for access to subsidies, it is done as welfare is here. It is an economic eligibility that, if you qualify according to the various factors, you automatically get.

That feature has its attractions, obviously, but one should also bear in mind that in those provinces the actual subsidies are extremely low and do not reflect the actual cost of care. Ontario has chosen to take a somewhat different approach whereby access is not guaranteed. The cost control, I guess, is in terms of the annual allocations, but if one does qualify, it does tend to be at the market rate.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I raised it only, not that I did not know the answer, but I wanted to remind members opposite that we do have the power to make recommendations in that area, as was suggested. It is not something that is just out of our hands.

The Chair: Thank you for that educational response.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Always trying to be helpful.

Mr Neumann: In our community there is a committee called Children and Youth Services Council. That was an initiative of your ministry, I believe, at some point in the past.

Ms Eastham: Yes. My understanding is that there was an experiment, if you will, in developing local infrastructures such as children's services committees to help co-ordinate children's services.

Mr Neumann: One of the issues we have been dealing with here is the need to better co-ordinate and communicate, among the variety of agencies, children's services, and no one has mentioned the role of children's services committees. Do you see them playing a role in the area of assisting in the co-ordination of integration of day care and education?

Ms Eastham: In some communities where they have effective and strong children's services committees, they may very well be the group that is most appropriate to meet that infrastructure

and co-ordination need. But my understanding is that experiment had mixed success and that while some communities have been left with good co-ordinating mechanisms that have survived and thrived, that vehicle is not available in all communities.

In fact, that is one of our planning dilemmas in child care—there is not any one infrastructure, local authority or whatever, that we can turn to for child care. We do work with a variety of partners, municipalities and school boards, social planning councils, etc. It is both a strength and a weakness in child care.

Mr Neumann: In terms of predicting legislative initiatives, you mentioned the new child care act and the provincial-municipal negotiations that are going on.

Ms Eastham: Yes.

Mr Neumann: You did not mention the need for legislative change that will come out of further phases of the Thomson report, the integration of the Child Welfare Act and Family Benefits Act. Are the two groups that are working on this talking to each other?

Ms Eastham: They are. Actually, the two project managers sort of talk weekly, if not daily, and have compared notes.

Mr Neumann: That is good to hear.

Ms Eastham: Those reviews are in fact going to unfold pretty well parallel.

1610

Mr Neumann: There is a lot of talk, quite properly, about day care in the schools. We did, at one time, hear quite a bit about the concept of day care centres at the workplace and I guess the closest we come to that are the ones in the high schools where, if you consider the workplace being the students attending the school, they have the benefit of being in the same building where their children are being looked after. Is there any initiative in terms of work-centred day care?

Ms Eastham: That is a model of child care in which actually we have been making reasonable, if modest, progress and I would be glad to provide some supplementary statistics on it, because I do not carry them in my head. But as well as Queen's Park, there are now a number of Ontario public service sites, and all of these government relocations, such as the northern relocation initiative, will include child care programs. But even in the private sector there has been a slow but steady growth in workplace programs. It is certainly an area, that and other

ways, in which employers can support child care, but we do plan to build on that.

I think, as with all child care, including for school-age children, the solution is not always a centre. Part of New Directions was to try to look at other methods—resource centres, hotlines, private home day care, good informal arrangements—as other ways of meeting some of the child care needs. So an employer's contribution might not be to just sort of put up a centre on site or close to the site; the solution for the employer may be in terms of more flexible benefits, extended maternity leaves, those types of contribution.

Mr Neumann: At some time in our society, we made decisions to segregate and service people through institutions, and we seem to be getting away from institutional care and back to integrating people back into their communities and neighbourhoods. I think that is great and I think that the less segregation we have along the age line the better. Is there any talk at all about putting child day care centres into, say, homes for the aged?

Ms Eastham: There are some instances. There are probably not that many. It is not a mass movement, but there are some instances of child care programs being placed in seniors' residences, and not just physically, but there being some intergenerational programming. That is happening.

Mr Neumann: I think there is a lot of positive potential to come out of that.

A final question, a very short one. Several presenters have used the term "the seamless day." Where did it come from?

Ms Eastham: Do you know?

Ms Baynham: The first time I heard it was in the Ministry of Education pilot up in Grey county, but then the coalition adopted that term, as we heard earlier today, and it has taken on.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is integrated, with one-stop shopping.

Mr Keyes: Just a quick follow-up: Are we doing any incentives to the private, industrially based sector for day care centres?

Ms Eastham: Where employers want to actually sort of provide child care services, they themselves would probably not qualify for funding. Usually, the operator of a workplace program would be a parent and/or a community board and they would qualify for program development startup funding exactly the same way as other community groups.

Mr Keyes: They would really need a community board, the directors or the parents, perhaps, who work in that area who could apply.

Ms Eastham: But there is a fair amount of outreach to employers to encourage them to get involved both at our area office level—they would be involved in some outreach to local employers—and we also have some materials and case studies to make the business case for child care.

Mr Keyes: Do you know offhand the extent to which that exists at the moment in the province? Do you have a record of all of those as well, or would they perhaps be there without being on record?

Ms Eastham: I am afraid I do not recall the number.

Mr Siemens: The number of centres?

Mr Keyes: Yes.

Mr Siemens: Around 70 at this stage.

Ms Eastham: It is over 60. I think it is sort of 60 plus about 20 Ontario public service sites, something like that, but we could certainly provide some supplementary statistics.

Mr Keyes: I just want to get an idea of the numbers that are there. You made no reference in any of your stats about the number that are served outside of the private home day cares.

Ms Eastham: You mean the number served in the informal sector? It is partly because we do not know for sure. By the nature of the informal system, we do not at this point have a good picture of the care arrangements there. However, there has recently been conducted, and the researcher is in the process of doing the analysis, a major national child care survey of actual child care arrangements and parental satisfaction with those arrangements. That is going to give us our first really good look at what the care arrangements are in the formal sector.

Mr Keyes: Formal or informal?

Ms Eastham: The informal sector. The operating assumption is that about 80 per cent of all care takes place in the informal sector.

Mrs O'Neill: I wanted to begin by saying that I think the efforts you are making with the Ministry of Education are well respected and certainly have filtered down right to the grass-roots level. I think there is a leadership role that people recognize there, particularly across our country, that this is a rather unique experience and that it has taken a lot of work and a lot of time and compromise, in the best sense of the word, to achieve a result that is focused and unified in the service of children in communities. I am

experiencing some of that in my own office by child care workers.

I would like to join with Mr Johnston in speaking to the resource centres. I really do hope that we can look at that, as a committee, and examine the role. Maybe if you have anything further on that particular area, whether communities outside of the Toronto area, which you said may be having a different attitude—of course, my area in Ottawa is relatively metropolitan as well, but the people who are working in the area have the same—what should I say?—not total feeling that it is being built to the manner in which they would feel it most useful. Certainly I am talking about the informal care givers at this time.

I have a question, because in the last week or so I have been asked this by two or three people. There was an article in the Ottawa Citizen that I am sure engendered some of this. You did attend to it. You brushed over it very quickly and I want to be sure I heard what you said.

There seems to be a feeling developing, at least in the media and I am not sure where else, that with the new spaces that are put into schools, there is a leap-frogging of those spaces for the subsidized space grants that municipalities make. I do not know whether there are any guidelines for that or whether that is an impression. I had never heard it before. I do not know whether you want to respond to that right now.

The other thing also is that all requests for new spaces always precede everything else, and that is the new building. I guess that may have some validity in that that is an initiative that is directed from the capital allocation grant, but perhaps you would like to speak to the way in which those structures fit into existing structures.

Ms Eastham: Going back to your earlier comments on resource centres, we would be glad to provide a study that was released just over two years ago now, looking at the resource centres as they existed then, and it has identified some of the policy issues, plus we could give you more up-to-date statistics on the funding and the numbers since New Directions was released.

In terms of the competition between existing programs and new programs—and these possibly would be new programs regardless of whether they were located in the school—that certainly has been one of the planning issues in a fairly high-growth situation and has been handled, I think, with mixed success, depending on the circumstances and the particular municipality. So I do not know that it is just the competition from the new schools. I think there is that

question of, if you have a limited resource to allocate, do you allocate it to the existing or do you go with the new or a balance of both?

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What we are attempting to do to prevent that kind of conflict, which has arisen in some communities, is to make in our planning for future growth in child care a clearer distinction between the fee subsidies that would support the existing system, compared to the fee subsidies that are needed, are sort of inherently part of the growth formula, so that there is an appropriate balance of those and so that, hopefully, there would not be that sense of competition.

Mrs O'Neill: But the allocation is still a municipal decision, is that not correct?

Ms Eastham: That is right.

Mrs O'Neill: There is not central direction that new school spaces get prioritization regarding subsidized spaces?

Ms Eastham: The actual allocation is that of the municipalities, but I think it has been made clear to them that the additional in-year funding that was achieved was in respect to the new spaces in the new schools. It was seen as supplementary to their base fee subsidy allocation. They were given that priority context, if you will, but the actual decision on the allocation rests with the municipality.

Mrs O'Neill: You are saying in-year funding. Was that a one-time thing that happened in 1988 or is that—

Ms Eastham: Yes, this was a follow-on from the New Directions announcement.

Mrs O'Neill: It was not ongoing in 1989.

Ms Eastham: No, this was supplementary. The funding for New Directions did not fully take into account the operating and fee subsidy implications of the Ministry of Education's first major capital announcement, which was included in New Directions, so we went back to the central agencies to get some supplementary funding in respect of the first capital announcement. It could be that the situation you are referring to does relate to the release of those additional funds, which will be kind of on top of the regular planning cycle around fee subsidies.

Mrs O'Neill: That is likely where this idea has come from, and people are expecting that that is going to be the normal thinking pattern. Okay. I had never heard that before, so it was quite new to my experience.

The Chair: I just have a couple of short questions here. When you look on page 7, when

you say infants, what would that relate to? Would crèche day care, for example, be in that total, and if so, how much would be the proportion?

Ms Eastham: I am not sure that I understand the question.

The Chair: Crèche day care, newborns who are in care.

Ms Eastham: It would be nought to 18 months, yes. That is the age parameter.

The Chair: So that is still the definition.

Ms Eastham: Yes.

The Chair: Some municipalities use the other, two years or 24 months or toilet-trained, as kind of the splitoff, and I was just making sure that it was the same.

How many 24-hour day care centres are there?

Ms Eastham: There are a few pilot projects in this regard, particularly to meet the needs of shift workers, but at the moment there are very few.

The Chair: Would those still be workplace-based?

Mr R. F. Johnston: They still are. That was four to five years ago.

Mr Siemens: I know of one.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is only one outside of Metro. There was one in Hamilton, as I recall, a few years ago.

The Chair: Maybe you could get back to us with the actual figures on how many spaces.

Ms Eastham: With some stuff on 24-hour care? Right.

The Chair: On page 7, the number of kids in the six to 12 range as per cent of total, I would take it that that would be spaces for latchkey kids for before- and after-school care and that sort of thing? It would be another program?

Ms Eastham: Yes, this would primarily be part-time before- and after-school care and care for professional development days, March breaks, etc.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The percentage of latchkey kids put up against that would be really interesting to see.

Ms Eastham: These are the kids who are not latchkey kids.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly.

The Chair: I was just going to use the general definition to clarify.

I guess my last point is this double bind that we find ourselves in in a community such as mine that has not built a new school in 15 years, 16 years, and does not then qualify for any of these funds, even though its need is as great as another

community that is a growth area. That distresses me very much.

There is another question that is brought up. You dealt with security of tenure in an older school, yet a newer school, by virtue of having space in the school designated for day care, keeps those for ever and the older school has to go on a catch-as-catch-can basis. The problem is doubly dealt with when you figure that an inner-city school or an older school would have a greater need for a proportion of day care than a newer school, and yet they are not in the equation unless you finagle and say: "What's a new school and what's an old school? You've got the spaces."

That really is difficult for me to deal with, particularly when I know Comsoc's social caring philosophy, that you allowed this to slip by. Maybe I am being unduly hard on you, but you are the only folks I see before me at this time. It has really made it difficult for me to rationalize how that decision was made, whether it is with the Ministry of Education or not.

I hear a lot of by-play. It is okay.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The chair has to be independent of—

Interjection: What is the question?

The Chair: I have raised this on more than one occasion. I am just trying to get the message through to all levels that it is very much of large concern to people in my community, who see this happening and yet cannot deal with that and say: "Wait a minute. What's the rationale?" I still have some difficulty with that. If you want to try to address that concern, that is fine. I will understand if you do not, but I just want to make the message clear that it is a great concern because it is unequal delivery for growth areas and nongrowth areas.

Ms Eastham: The planning rationale when the Ministry of Education new school initiative was conceived was that the reason it would be attached to new schools was the assumption that this would then correspond with high-population-growth areas, particularly some of the suburban rim areas, where we knew that there would be very little development of child care services and very little social agency infrastructure in terms of church basement, boys' and girls' clubs, etc. So that was the kind of planning premise behind it.

In terms of balancing that, from a planning point of view, I guess there are two alternatives. A sort of a principle when you have an inequitable situation is that, rather than withdrawing the benefits that pertain to the new schools, you may choose to extend the benefit.

So one solution would be an expansion of the Ministry of Education's capital fund to take in other situations, and to some extent this solution is already available from our ministry.

The Ministry of Education's capital fund is not the only source of capital funding for expanded child care. We do have our major capital fund of \$21 million. That can be accessed either for renovations in existing schools or for expansion of community-based services. So if there are physical or other limits on low-growth school boards' access to the Ministry of Education's capital fund, there is a safety valve, if you will, a reasonable balance, available from our own ministry's capital funding.

The Chair: Except that an educator would say: "My primary responsibility is the number of seats or students that I have. I do not want to take on Comsoc's load and whether or not they work together to make it happen." In the real world, I think that relationship does not take place, particularly where the municipalities do the allocating of spaces and not the school boards. It is that whole question of, you look at a program and you say—

Ms Eastham: Sorry—

Interjections.

The Chair: I will wait. I may not be making myself clear.

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Ms Eastham: Maybe we need to go back to clarify what we are talking about when we talk about spaces. Are you referring to fee—

The Chair: Yes, but you were talking about capital as well.

Ms Eastham: I was meaning spaces in terms of licensed space, regardless of whether or not it receives a fee subsidy.

The Chair: Right.

Ms Eastham: I began to think maybe you were talking about the allocation of fee subsidies, which is related, but it is—

The Chair: No, I was talking about—okay, you were talking about capital, some of the capital allocations from the Ministry of Education or your ministry.

Ms Eastham: Yes.

The Chair: What I am saying is that you seem to imply that the educator would be only too willing to allocate some space in the school—an old school, not a new school—because that is easy for him to make that decision because the money can be allocated from another ministry, yours. I guess what I am saying is that in an older school it

is tougher to get the physical space allocated, because, of course, they want to keep all of that for their education "responsibilities."

What has happened is that the new schools get the money and everybody sees that, but if you do not build a new school, no money. Yet that means some areas get an advantage of having a higher proportion of kids who are getting day care services while the older areas sit back and say, "Wait a minute, what happened here?"

I guess what I was saying was that if the initiative had some balance in it, with the old school, new school concept, you could have taken an inner-city school in my region and said, "We can now allow those things to happen in that school," which has the space and probably the greater need than the new school area. It would have struck a better balance. I guess that is the point I am trying to make.

Ms Eastham: I guess that in my mind it may not have been a perfect or an appropriate balance, but there was an attempt in our ministry's capital and startup fund to strike a balance. The balance may have been wrong, but there was an attempt to make sure that there was a similar level of activity in existing schools, as well as a similar level of activity outside of school sites. We were looking at a variety of different approaches to meeting school-age needs.

The Chair: Thank you very much for an excellent presentation; it invoked a lot of discussion.

Mr R. F. Johnston: There is one question I wanted to ask you, and it is relatively important. I did not know about this until earlier, and I am not even sure about it. I want to ask you, if I might, about private schools and child care. I have just been given information that maybe a lot of kids are falling through the gaps in terms of any kind of control and use of ministry standards.

If a private school has established, on the basis of its grade 1 capacity to operate, whatever that figure is, and then it goes into operation, can it then start to offer programs for kids who are younger, junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten kids and even younger children, within that school and never be identified or come under the auspices of your ministry in terms of the child care component of that?

Ms Eastham: Yes. My understanding is that once registered as a private school, it is deemed exempt from coverage by the Day Nurseries Act, and this is an exemption which in some cases is perfectly appropriate, like Montessori schools, for example, but there are some operators who would tend to use that as a loophole to avoid

some of the standards under the Day Nurseries Act. That would be one of the types of things we would be looking at in our legislation review.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It strikes me as something that this committee should know a little bit more about in terms of our recommendations as well, because I had not got the idea that there was anybody who could offer what we would call a group day care in the province without having to deal with the terms and qualifications of the Day Nurseries Act. Is there a bit more information you can get us about how a private school would go about doing this? What does it take to establish the school and—

Ms Eastham: Yes, we and the Ministry of Education could provide some supplementary information on that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That would be very interesting. I was unaware of that. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Speed up the chairing; I like that.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair: You never get a question from me, whether I am in the chair or not. What is he worried about?

Our next presentation is the Umbrella Central Day Care Services. Would you come forward please?

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair: Yes. We are at 66 cents a minute right now.

I would like to welcome you to the committee this afternoon. Would you like to identify yourselves for the purposes of Hansard, please.

UMBRELLA CENTRAL DAY CARE SERVICES

Ms Ayles: Okay. I am Tess Ayles. I am executive director of Umbrella Central Day Care Services, and this is Christina Sarantopoulos. She is a cohort of mine, and she directs the convention child care services at Umbrella Central Day Care Services.

We have an information sheet to give you that tells you something about Umbrella, because it really affects the presentation that we want to make. Basically, what Umbrella is an organization that provides administrative support services to nonprofit community-based day care centres all across Ontario. That is pretty well what it says on our sheet.

I would like to thank you for inviting us to be here today, and I do appreciate the opportunity to

address you on behalf of Umbrella Central Day Care Services.

Our organization is 98 per cent volunteers and two per cent staff, which is ourselves, and we were asked to make a presentation to you about the things that we would like to see changed in early childhood education. We just chose one item rather than the long list and decided to concentrate on that.

What we concentrated on was that we would like to see the early childhood education field be more user-friendly. I heard you mentioning earlier in your discussion with Kay Eastham something about the seamless day, which of course we have heard a lot about. At Umbrella we have some real problems with this seamless day. Part of this is that we feel, and I want to make this point again later, that the education field is mandated to provide education for children. It is not mandated to be a user-friendly service. By a user-friendly service, we mean that it is approachable and accessible as well as affordable.

We feel that most people using child care services are vulnerable; usually they are young, as in the parents being young. Nowadays many of them are new to the country. They are certainly new to the task of child-raising. Many of them do not speak the language; in our province, mainly English. Many have a poor knowledge about nutrition and child-raising abilities. They have no idea of what in our country does and does not constitute child abuse. They do not know what services are available to them; for example, if their children have learning problems of any sort, hearing difficulties, if they are disabled, if they have severe allergies, asthma, epilepsy. They do not know anything about any of these services. They do not often even know how to decide what the difficulty is with the child.

We feel that we need more educational opportunities for parents. We need it connected to the child care services. It needs to be free and well done, in a supportive, compassionate manner, and this is essential for the quality of life of the parents and of the children and therefore of our society. In particular, we need more services available to single parents, who are mostly women, mostly poor, and the children are poor also. There is ample evidence available now, through such things as the Social Assistance Review Committee report, to show that this sector of our society is under enormous stress in trying to cope with the demands of our sophisticated, high-tech society. How can these people

be adequate advocates for their children when they are emotionally drained, suffering from poor self-esteem and often not capable of really understanding what is required of them by the school system or by our society?

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Parents need to be better educated about the interrelationship between the school system and the day care system. When day cares are located in schools—and I found this from personal experience—it is very confusing for them to have to pay a fee in one room of the school and be asked to fund-raise, and then in another room in the school the child is cared for by the educational system.

I feel it is essential that day care does stay as a separate system. Children need the ratios of teachers to children provided for by the day nurseries. They definitely need the hot nutritious lunches and the snacks. They need the sleep time that is offered as part of the day care system, and the parents need the staff to be there from seven in the morning until six at night, to be responsive, to be caring as individuals, someone they can talk to about the development of their child, not in an evaluative, educative way but just as a sympathetic sounding board.

A lot is expected of the school board already and it has difficulty being responsive to the needs of a variety of parents in a variety of settings. This does not only come out of my experience in Toronto. I have been doing some journeying around the province because I am writing a book on board management right now, and over and over again I hear of the difficulties school boards are having with the enormous number of children in their classes and with the young teachers they have in many areas being responsive to the needs of parents, especially parents with children with any kind of special need, whether it be a behavioural need, some sort of physical need, a learning disability or something like that.

Day cares with a community-based model can be responsive and must be encouraged to strive to be even more responsive to the needs of individual parents. We must do everything we can to uphold the family model. I believe it is the strength of our society and I feel there are ways we can do that.

We can educate parents about the educational system, its structure, how it functions, what its role is in the life of the child, where the parent fits in and what is expected and will be expected of the parent. We can educate the parents about what to expect from teachers; what criteria to use when evaluating the teacher, the classroom, the

school; where a parent can effectively lend support, and when it is legitimate to make complaints and whom the parent complains to.

I believe early childhood educators are needed to network between parents, who are the users, the school, the teachers, the educational bureaucracy, the trustees, the principals, the area superintendents and so forth. Teachers in schools have so much to cope with, so many children from so many different cultures, different ideas on discipline, different ideas of the needs of parents and children from the different cultures, and these parents and children are very varied. Some families are so shy that one child must interpret for the whole family or else they do not know the language. Many are having difficulty themselves with their children and with the new culture and the new values that they come into. The children and parents often do not get the attention they need and they do not know where to go when they do need the services that are available.

Most early childhood educators can recognize the needs of children very early in their lives because they see the children from the time they are infants, toddlers or preschoolers and they recognize family needs at this time, when a child is young enough that a little help could go a long way and when the family may be open to receiving help because a baby seems so helpless, whereas later on the child is seen as needing discipline. I would like to see these resources more available to us in early childhood education, not only available once the child gets into the school system, as at present, or is in corrections or is in a special-needs program.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the changes I would like to see in the early childhood education field. I got into the field myself having been in corrections after reading *To Herald A Child* by Laurier LaPierre. Some of you may be familiar with that report. I think he wrote about a user-friendly model. The user or parent needs our support for the wellbeing of the child and therefore the wellbeing of our society.

Organizations such as nonprofit child care programs must be properly supported, because they are responsive to the needs of the individual parents, and could be more so if the resources were available. Community-based nonprofit centres are mandated for that very purpose. Schools are and should be mandated to educate children. I think they need their task simplified, not made more complicated. They could do a better job of educating if there were other helpful services available, such as dynamic community-

based child care centres that deal with the needs of the user.

I strongly believe the ECE field has the potential to provide a user-friendly service but can only do so with the support of the government through support of resources and through legislation.

Ms Poole: Welcome to the committee, Tess. It is nice to see you again. I enjoyed your presentation and I would like to follow up on some of the comments.

First of all, for committee members' own information, how many day care centres are members of Umbrella Central Day Care Services?

Ms Ayles: About 250 at present, between 200 and 250.

Ms Poole: Is this a province-wide organization?

Ms Ayles: Yes, it is.

Ms Poole: Is there any centralization of most of your day care centres?

Ms Ayles: Yes. Most of them are in the Metropolitan Toronto area, but we represent the whole of the province of Ontario. Many people outside the Metropolitan area are more like affiliate members. They get our newsletter and use us as a resource, because some of our services are more hands-on, like, for example, our conference this Saturday.

Ms Poole: I would like to follow up on your comments about the seamless day. Do any of your centres right now have a working model where they co-ordinate with the schools to try to pass information back and forth and try to assist one another? Do you find any of that co-ordination happening right now?

Ms Ayles: Yes. For example, I am chairperson of a board of directors that has day care centres in two schools in Scarborough, and the principals of those two schools sit on our board. What happens is that we negotiate with them for anything and everything. For example, in one case they will probably end up putting us into a portable out of the school because they need the space back for school. We were sort of being useful to keep the school, and now that they have more kids, they will probably move us.

To be honest with you, I have two experiences in terms of schools and day cares in schools. One is that I think of it as probably the best kind of space for day cares to use. We are sort of hermit crabs; you know, wherever there is an empty space we look at it. I think that is kind of sad, because they are the same children, right?

But the other experience I have is that I think, in terms of the seamlessness, children need a change. They should not be in the school all day, from seven in the morning till six at night and 12 months of the year. There is a different kind of relationship and service that is provided by a teacher with 25 or 30 kids in a classroom where she is there. Her purpose is to have those kids come out at the end of the year reading, writing and doing arithmetic.

Our purpose is to provide for the social, emotional, developmental needs of the child. I am not saying that a lot of teachers do not incidentally also meet those needs, but that is not their job description. Many of them go over and above, beyond the job description and everybody else says, "Well, they have not learned reading, writing and arithmetic," but those kids are coming into that classroom with many needs as well as the reading, writing and arithmetic. The longer they are in a certain atmosphere, the more aggressive I think they are going to get in demanding that those other needs be met. I actually see the service as being much more compatible if the job descriptions were clearer than what we have right now. I do not know if that answers your question.

Ms Poole: That is part of it, but what I was thinking of was more at the grass-roots level. If you have little Johnny who goes to a day care centre, then goes to a school for junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten in the afternoons and you are having a problem with little Johnny that you have identified because you have a much smaller ratio and you are able to identify some of these problems, do you have any way of communicating with Johnny's teacher to—

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Ms Ayles: The trouble is that right at the moment there is a perceived difference in status. So you are sort of going on knee and saying, "Please, will you listen to me because I have some concerns," and the teacher says, "Oh, we'll call up the psychiatrist and make an appointment six months down the road." You know that six months down the road this problem is going to escalate and in the meantime the child is going to be receiving a lot of negative feedback, spend a lot of time in the principal's office and, in some of the schools that I have worked in, a lot of times sent down to the day care centre. Because kids start showing other ways of asking for help in problem situations: they get sick, they get into a fight with another kid, they throw up their lunch. They have lots of

ways of asking for help. What I have had happen in many cases is that we have had a kid—

Mr R. F. Johnston: They still use that last one.

Ms Poole: He is still a kid, so just ignore him.

Mr Campbell: He is still in day care.

Ms Ayles: But it is a frustration, there is no doubt it is a real frustration, because we have already known that kid for two or three years and in many cases—can I give you an actual life example?

Ms Poole: As long as you do not use the name.

Ms Ayles: No, I will not use any names. We had a child brought to us. We were the third day care centre. He was brought to us as a severe asthmatic child. He was on medication five times a day. One of the troubles with this child was that he had a temper tantrum every time he was to take medication, which of course brought on his asthma and the kid was sick all the time. So one of the staff said, "Okay, we're going to pretend that this is Superman juice, we're going to make capes for all the kids and this kid is going to be number one Superman and he's going to have to have his juice." We cut down his medication to two times a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, from four or five times a day.

What we had learned to do with this child—and this is what you can do in a day care because you have one staff for every eight kids when they are two and a half and up—was we went to this kid 20 minutes before the time to go outside and we said: "Now, Adrian, in 20 minutes we're going to be going outside. You're going to need to do these things. What do you need to do to help yourself be ready?" Because with asthma, if any of you know, the change in atmosphere and transitions and all that bring on an attack. So we went through all this thing.

We wrote up a very complicated four-page report saying how we had worked out this system, how we had helped Adrian get way down on his medication. We took it to the kindergarten teacher and we asked for an interview with her and we said, "This kid is going to be absolutely fine, but these things need to happen." She said, "Look, I've got 25 kids in this class. You think I've got time to do this?" which she did not have, quite honestly. Within three days of Adrian entering that kindergarten room he was being shut in the bathroom having temper tantrums, because that was the way she dealt with him. She had 25 kids in the classroom. How was she going to deal with a temper tantrum?

Ms Poole: So basically what you are saying is it is not only communication between the school and the day care; it is also a matter of the ratio.

Ms Ayles: What you can do and what you cannot do and what you are mandated to do and what you are not mandated to do.

Ms Sarantopoulos: There is a resistance. Other supervisors who do have centres in schools comment that there is no communication between themselves and the principal. Everything they ask for is refused or, "Later, later." They are not willing to permit them to do almost anything.

Ms Ayles: You are running into another difficulty, and this I can tell you from experience as a supervisor. For a principal, you are like a foreign object in a school. You are like a second-like, "Who are you?" As the supervisor of the day care centre, you are not an employee of his, you are not the teacher. So he does not have that kind of control over you, but you do have an enormous and vested interest in the parents and the children, in many cases because we do often end up in the role of parent advocate. In this situation, a perfect example is a parent comes downstairs and says: "What can I do? One minute my kid is healthy, now my kid isn't healthy. What can I do?" So you say, "You need to go sit down with the principal." "Well, the principal has already told me, 'I have this many teachers and this much money and I can only afford this much,'" all the money stuff. So I say to the parent, "Look, let's go up together," because we get to know the principal. So you sit down too. Then the principal is dealing with two people and he is saying, "Well, who are you?" So you end up in a funny situation, which I do not think is very comfortable for most principals.

Yet the parent needs some sort of advocate. In many cases we are dealing with, those parents do not speak English, they do not understand the school system, they do not understand the people they can go and talk to, all that sort of thing. So here are some people. Number one, we are around when they are around too, because the school is only there from nine until 3:30 or four o'clock. Teachers do not have time to be returning calls and all that sort of stuff. If you phone a teacher, he will say, "Look, I'll give you 10 minutes Friday afternoon from four to 10 after." The parent says, "Yes, but I've got to still be at work." So if the parent comes in at five, the day care people are still there. And the parent does need somebody to talk to. So it is a very different delivery.

Ms Poole: We have heard a lot about how ECEs are, if you pardon the term, second-class

citizens when it comes to the educational criteria and being able to use that diploma, but you have given us a better insight into how that carries on when you are actually in that setting and trying to deal with a school.

Ms Ayles: I will give you another example from schools. I have worked in four different schools as a supervisor of a day care centre, and in all those four schools we are not allowed to use the staff washrooms or the staff lounges. We maybe have something down in the basement underneath the building or something like that. Just little things like that. Some of it is the resources and how they are allocated. But when you talk about things like seamless day care, I do not know if it would be seamless for the ECEs.

Ms Poole: Good point.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was wondering why I was hearing complaints about sensitivities to kryptonite in Blantyre Public School. Now I know what it is about. I could not understand.

It is nice to see you. I want to just be a devil's advocate for a second. Although I have long been an advocate of parental involvement in a lot of our day cares, I am beginning to hear now, as the system matures, more and more concern from people in the system that parental boards, in many cases, are not part of a user-friendly system in comparison with their access in the public schools, but in fact are bit players who basically do whatever the director of the day care wants because they do not have the time to be able to participate. Or where there is a participatory board, it is the yuppies who run the board and the people who are on subsidized space, etc, are very much nonparticipants. So I want to say that I think there is a myth out there about the boards these days and I want you to respond to that.

Ms Ayles: Number one, I do not know if you know this, but Umbrella is developing a board manual, a daily operations manual and a finance management manual. I think there is a need for that and for a service like Umbrella that can train boards. We are certainly more busy than we know what to do with. I think that is a possible thing to happen, but my experience is that with some education—and that was one of the first things I said, that the education is needed—and with some support the boards do work. They are not a magic answer, I agree with you there, but I think they are still necessary.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think they are too often just seen as bake sale operatives.

Ms Ayles: I think they are necessary in a far greater role than that. I think that what has to

happen is there has to be support in helping them to evolve into the kinds of boards—I could take anyone here around and show you models of boards that are fabulous and working beautifully, and of course you can find boards that are not working well. There are glitches that have to be worked out.

It is very much a pioneer thing really. We have become more sophisticated in the kinds of requirements we have, with things like the direct operating grant, with the complications of applying for subsidy, with the demand that is on day care from a variety of different groups with different cultural backgrounds. I think that is where the yuppies come in. We have not grown in terms of knowing how to help those other people be involved, because it is a very, very new idea to them to become involved. On the part of somebody, usually the director of a day care, there has to be encouragement for that to happen.

Part of the problem I see is that there is no support, there really is not. It is just, “You get out there and get a board going.” In volunteer organizations, there is a lot that has to be done. We are fighting right now at Today’s Child to have a full-time administrator just for that very reason. You need somebody like that, but it is much more dynamic when it happens.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thanks very much. It has been good to see you again.

Mr Neumann: We had a presentation earlier today from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. It is interesting that they presented a lot of the same information in terms of assessment of what is happening but reached a different conclusion.

Ms Ayles: Yes.

Mr Neumann: They did not use the term “hermitage crabs,” but they did describe the situation and their conclusion was that the solution is that you have got a setup with these boards of education, you have a known quantity and that we should say that from 3.8 years on, it is the responsibility of the boards of education to handle not only the education but the child care needs from seven in the morning until six at night, and below 3.8 years of age it is the—

Ms Ayles: Catch as catch can.

Mr Neumann: No, it is the Ministry of Community and Social Services; it is the board-operated, private nonprofit day care; it is the municipal day care and so on. Comments on how you can describe the same problems but arrive at a different conclusion?

Ms Ayles: I think it is back to what I said earlier. My feeling would be whatever is the best, number one, what is the most healthy and in the best interests of the child. I do not think a child 3.8 years old is ready for—none of us in this room is ready for a 12-hour day in the same room with the same persons in charge of us. We are not ready for it. I am not ready for it. I do not know about you.

Mr Neumann: We were pleased to see a new chairman.

Ms Ayles: I just feel that for the child and the parent it is not in their best interests. I do not feel it is right for the parent because I think the school board tends to say to the parent: “Okay, go home. We’ll take over. We know what we’re doing. We’re in charge. Goodbye.” I think that is very easy for parents from a different culture. They are already dealing with a new language, new culture, new values, all sorts of things, but I do not think the education system has—they have so much on their plates right now that I do not see that they are able to manage what they have on their plates. I think they are able to manage education. I love our schools, I love the education they can offer, but I think early childhood education and academic education are two different things.

Personally, I would love to see a child not go to school until he was eight, which is what Piaget says is developmentally the right age for a child to start going to school.

Mr Neumann: It is interesting you mention that because we had the principals’ association in who said that between four and eight it should be even more informal and not grade-associated and from age eight on it should be more related to a more structured approach.

Ms Ayles: Yes, and that is exactly what I believe.

Ms Sarantopoulos: Something that was said earlier too was, just like the private schools, once you move those children into the public school system they are going to lose that one-to-eight ratio. Plus the training of school teachers: When I first started out, I wanted to go to the University of Toronto and become a teacher and then I decided, “I can’t do that,” because at the time there was no demand. I went to Ryerson. I said: “Wait a second. It took me four years to get a degree to learn about young children and these people are doing four years of history, psychology or whatever and then one year in the faculty of education entitles them to teach.” I saw that as a big—there is a gap here somewhere. Why should

they be able, how can you be able to teach a kindergarten, junior or senior? I myself who have had four years cannot do it because it is not recognized. I do not see that their training that one year makes them capable enough to teach a child younger than seven or eight.

Mr Neumann: I am glad, in a way, that you have reached a different conclusion, and maybe we will end up with some system that is halfway between what you are proposing and what they have proposed. Having worked at a community level for many, many years, I am a great admirer of the volunteer sector, the role of volunteers in our community and the volunteer boards. I think,

as inefficient as they sometimes are, they play a tremendous role in this society and we cannot bureaucratize everything and provide it by bureaucrats and administrators. I think there is role for the user-friendly approach. So I commend you for continuing the struggle, because I know it is a struggle.

The Vice-Chair: Thank you very much, Tess and Christina, for appearing in front of the committee today.

I would like to adjourn the committee until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The committee adjourned at 1704.

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Second Session, 34th Parliament

Wednesday 7 February 1990



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Wednesday 7 February 1990

The committee met at 1022 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: I think we will start. First of all, I apologize to the deputants for being late starting, but sometimes this happens around here. I hope you will bear with us.

We are going to start with the Advisory Council on Special Education, Eva Nichols, Margaret Walker and Judith Elting, if you could come up, we can proceed. You can introduce your topic any way you wish. How is that?

Mrs Nichols: We thought about singing it.

The Chair: Oh, that would be wonderful, that would make our day actually.

Mrs Nichols: Next time.

Mrs Walker: Oh no, we had better be careful.

Mrs Nichols: We will arrange for a singer.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs Nichols: Good morning and thank you very much for allowing us to come once again. I am Eva Nichols and I chair the Ministry of Education's Advisory Council on Special Education. I am appointed to that council through my involvement with the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. On my right is Judith Elting. She is the head of special education at Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School in Peel and she represents the Ontario Teachers' Federation on the council. On my left is Margaret Walker, who is the provincial president of the Association for Bright Children and she represents that association on council.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you take holidays together as well?

Mrs Nichols: No, not quite.

Mrs O'Neill: You seem to travel together so much.

Mrs Nichols: Yes, we do.

Interjections.

Mrs Nichols: Yes, I suppose.

Our mandate as a council is to advise the Minister of Education and the ministry staff on a variety of matters relating to special education.

We have certainly looked at the whole area of early child education and such large issues as lifelong learning on many occasions before, so we are particularly pleased to be able to present our comments to you. These comments will be brief. They were prepared in a brief fashion, but certainly there is a shortage of time for you. We felt that by focusing on a few key points we can perhaps be more effective in terms of telling you what we are concerned about.

We have always believed very firmly that learning and, by extension, the learner are the central pivots of the educational system of Ontario. Unfortunately, recent initiatives and the the revised mission statement espoused in the action plan for the restructuring of education certainly bring into question whether this learner-centred system will continue or disappear in our zealous pursuit of economic considerations.

From our perspective, the learner is the key. The habits of lifelong learning are ideally established in the early years. Research tells us that birth to age three are probably the most critical years in terms of learning. That is the age when the brain grows at the fastest rate, when language acquisition is at a maximum, when the child adopts his or her habits of learning and when the child's self-image as a learner is developed. Therefore, our initiatives in early childhood education must consider all of these factors.

This is particularly important for the child who, as a result of a different rate of development, a physical, sensory or neurological impairment, learns differently from the way that we consider the norm. This child will reach the milestones of early development at a significantly different rate from the majority of children. However, in considering his or her needs, we must still focus on all aspects of his or her development; that is, cognitive, physical, emotional, moral and social growth. In other words, appropriate early childhood education must focus on the needs of the whole child.

The child does not function or learn in a vacuum. Therefore, it is particularly important that the adults who facilitate his or her learning are cognizant of the child's needs, of normal child development and of the ways that the

regular needs and special needs can be harmonized for the individual's benefit.

The exceptional child is often identified at birth or during the perinatal period. For the more obvious physical and sensory impairments, this is relatively easy. For other less obvious, less visible conditions, the identification may occur much later, perhaps not even until the child is enrolled in school. This is very unfortunate. Although we would never admit to any time being too late for helping a child or even an adult with special needs, the earlier we can help the better it is for the child. Therefore, early identification is very important.

The interdisciplinary model used in child development clinics is a particularly effective one for children with special needs, especially since it includes communication with the parents. Clinic staff typically work with the family and refer them to the appropriate advocacy group for additional information, guidance and support. It would be ideal if all major hospitals implemented this model of early intervention.

Early identification of the at-risk child must precipitate appropriate programming, whether formal or informal. In this instance, we are talking about risks to learning and development rather than physical risks. In other words, there is not much point in telling a parent the child is at risk and in three, four or even five years we will do something about it.

The requisite community-based programming could be made available through a variety of media. Hospital-based programs are very expensive, but other programs delivered through public health units, day and child care centres and local agencies could be a great deal more affordable and yet just as effective.

Whatever programs are developed, they must be supported through interministerial co-operative funding mechanisms, with the three lead ministries—the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services—assuming an equitable, though not necessarily equal, share of the load.

Parent education and training in parenting skills must also accompany such initiatives. These can be delivered through in-school, community-based and continuing education programming. The key is to empower families so that they can access and utilize whatever services are available to meet the needs of their children.

In the 1990s a very high percentage of young children are involved in some formalized program; that is, non-family-based child or day care.

Therefore, it is important that the professionals working in such settings are trained to identify and program for the special needs of many of these children.

1030

The majority of the staff of such centres are trained in the early childhood education programs delivered through the community colleges and Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. Their training is mandated through some provincial guidelines, but in the area of special needs or at-risk children the programs, as well as the graduates, tend to show a rather uneven competency. It is particularly important that the training that is delivered in these programs is enhanced in the areas of child development, special needs programming, parent empowerment and accessing existing community-based programs. We look to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to deliver this as well as developing some in-service programs to upgrade the competency of those who work in these centres already.

Similar initiatives should also be instituted for those who work in the primary grades in the school system. The primary specialist qualification needs to be strengthened with special emphasis being placed on the practicum. It would be helpful also if primary teachers receiving children from early childhood education centres were more aware of and respected the kind of programming that the children had received prior to being enrolled in school.

Mrs Elting: Communication is a key component that seems to be missing. If the information does not flow from the child development/hospital-based perinatal facilities to the family and the early childhood education facility, and then in turn to the school system, the child ends up the loser. There is very poor tracking of information about the child's needs and about what interventions have been tried. In an ideal situation the parent can act as a case manager ensuring that the requisite information is passed along.

However, even the most effective parent cannot assure the information is acted upon. This attitude of, "It was not invented here," and therefore we do not accept it, seems to hinder the progress of exceptional children throughout their childhood. Not only do the professionals often not consider the findings of other professionals in another level of the system—eg, education versus day care—but as the child moves from one geographical location to another the cycle starts again. For example, the school boards in Metropolitan Toronto do not accept the findings

of one another's identification and placement review committees. As a result, a child who has been declared exceptional and is involved in a special education program in Scarborough will have to be reconsidered by another IPRC, whenever it can be convened, if the family moves across the city line into Toronto. Clearly this adds to the frustration of the family that is already having a hard time dealing with its child's special needs. If our goal is to enhance the learning process with a view to promoting lifelong learning, these communication barriers must be removed.

There are some excellent programs in existence. It is too bad that the dissemination of information about them is so ad hoc. The advisory council recommends that there be a structure introduced through one of the existing communication vehicles—for example, the Council for Exceptional Children publications—that would serve to present successful models of appropriate intervention.

This is an excellent time to make change for the benefit of children. The Day Nurseries Act and the Child and Family Services Act are under review. The federal government is reviewing the Young Offenders Act. The Ministry of Education has been reviewing the Education Act and the amendments should be introduced shortly. At the same time, research is identifying more information about environmental conditions that hinder learning, such as poverty, family conflict, lack of ethnocultural equity, etc.

Therefore, the advisory council strongly urges the Legislature of Ontario to implement the recommendations contained in the first three reports of the select committee on education for the enablement of children, the empowerment of families and the continued commitment to the learning process. We look forward to the fourth report with recommendations focusing on the goal of lifelong learning.

Mrs Walker: I would like to now go over the recommendations, which are on the final page. The Ministry of Education's Advisory Council on Special Education recommends that:

First, all initiatives put forward to promote lifelong learning be child-centred, focusing on the whole child in the early years and his or her cognitive, physical, emotional, moral and social growth;

Second, education and training in parenting skills be made available throughout Ontario, with a goal of empowering families;

Third, the training offered to both degree and diploma candidates in the field of child develop-

ment and early childhood education be enhanced such that the graduates' competencies are improved in early and ongoing identification, programming for special needs, accessing community-based resources and communication- and team-building skills for the benefit of all children;

Fourth, the availability of and access to community-based resources be improved by the establishment of more child development clinics, the training of more speech and language professionals and greater involvement of public health services;

Fifth, research findings and information on successful and exemplary programs be disseminated to all appropriate professionals as well as to parent organizations;

Sixth, the tracking of important information and the continuity of programming initiatives be guaranteed such that no child "falls between the cracks" as the family moves from one location to another and the child matures and moves from one service level to another;

Seventh, interministerial communication, cooperation and collaboration among all the Ontario ministries with responsibilities for children be mandated in such a way that the child benefits every time. We have suggested several initiatives, which could be to: facilitate early and ongoing identification of needs; facilitate the development of human and financial resources; facilitate programming with a holistic approach; facilitate the utilization of existing resources more effectively and more efficiently; provide prevention programs rather than restorative, corrective and remedial programs; facilitate the smooth transition from preschool to elementary school to college and university and the world of work to retirement; facilitate improved communication among parents and professionals.

At this time we would open it up for questions, if there are questions from members of the select committee.

The Chair: There certainly are. As you did the other day, you have again evoked a lot of interest from our committee. I appreciate the time that has gone into your brief.

Mrs O'Neill: This has a lot of very stimulating thought in it. I guess your first opening statement sort of took me off base when you seemed to be making a judgement call in the third paragraph. You say that you hope that a learner-centred system will continue and not disappear in our zealous pursuit of economic considerations. You must have some reason for saying that. You must see some of the directions we are taking as being

along that vein. I have not yet seen that. Particularly with the announcement on the last day of January, that would seem to support the kind of thinking we are going into with pilot projects and good research. So you must be seeing something I am not seeing.

Mrs Nichols: The advisory council has not been involved as much as it would like to in the whole initiatives around the restructuring of education, but we have certainly seen the written material that was presented by the minister and the deputy and Mr Beevor, who is sort of taking this initiative forward to the school board chairmen and directors.

We were particularly concerned about the mission statement that appeared in that action plan, which I am sure members of your committee have seen, where instead of, as in the past, the mission statement stopping at enabling the learner to develop his or her full potential, it goes on to talk about the economic and social contributions that learner can make to the province.

When we listened to the minister and the deputy, there was a great deal said about the fact that the reason why we are proceeding in this particular direction is because Canada as a whole, and certainly Ontario as a province, is not keeping pace with other developed countries in terms of economic considerations. We are not able to maintain our position in the global village, as the minister kept on mentioning, because our students are not trained and educated appropriately, and that these initiatives, which are to take up the efforts and energies of the school boards and the educational system of Ontario for the next 10 years, at least, certainly into the year 2000, would be geared towards addressing that particular concern.

When we were given the opportunity to ask some questions, it was the then deputy who was answering the questions, and I asked the question, "Exactly where does the concern relating to exceptional pupils fit into this particular package?" His answer was that when he first went to the ministry, everybody talked special education and nothing else until some people were rather sick of it and that he was quite sure people would try as best they can not to forget about exceptional students.

1040

I have to tell you that certainly those of us who were there from the advisory council, but also representatives of some of the other associations, like Community Living and like the Ontario Psychological Association, whose representa-

tives I did speak to afterward, were very concerned that this was a covert or overt—I am not sure which—signal from the ministry that the expenditure of sums on programming which is purely geared towards the individual's needs and does not necessarily bring with it clear-cut economic growth may not be considered as important as the other things.

I recognize that we are interpreting this, because nobody has said, "We are no longer going to fund special education," but you will recall the last time we were in front of you, we were talking about our concerns about the general legislative grants and the way special education has appeared in that. Coupled with that particular presentation in December to the school boards, the general feeling out there seems to be that we can no longer afford an educational system in this province where enabling the student and helping him or her to reach his or her potential is enough of a goal and that we have to look at what kind of economic return there can be made from that.

Obviously, our council is there to represent students who are exceptional, and we know that in some cases educating them appropriately is more expensive than educating nonexceptional students, and second, if you are just looking at dollars and cents, the kind of contribution that they are going to be able to make in some cases will not be as great as the economic return on educating nonexceptional students. But we always felt that this province, collectively, was committed to individual potential and focusing on the learning and that there was value in the learning process in itself.

While nobody has gone as far as saying, "We don't care about the learning process and we don't care about the learner," I think that just some of the initiatives that are happening are giving a message that if the economic considerations have not yet completely overtaken the much more philosophical commitment to the learner, they are well on the way to doing so.

We feel that you, as a committee, because you are an all-party committee and because you report to the Legislature, if you agree with our concern, may be able to comment on that in such a way that perhaps it will not reverse what the Ministry of Education has put out in its action plan but at least can make sure that the other side of the coin does not disappear completely.

I am sorry. That was very long, but I really just wanted to explain exactly where our concerns are.

Mrs O'Neill: I appreciate it. I am glad that is in Hansard, because I really was not aware of the concern that was there, simply because the reading I have done on this whole area is that we are trying to have people reach their potential before they have to make critical decisions. That still makes me feel that we are talking about good education and holistic education and that streaming can be very confining and we are trying to build in all the supports. Mr Johnston, I am really sorry you just missed this, because you would have really enjoyed this.

Mrs Nichols: You will have to read it in Hansard.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If somebody will read it to me.

Mrs Nichols: The concern really is not related to streaming in what I am saying at all. Members of council understand that.

Mrs O'Neill: Okay, because the two things are quite closely tied in the new initiatives that I see for the transition years, but you are bringing a whole other perspective which I am really pleased you have expressed so explicitly, and we will certainly be giving that consideration.

If I may get a little more specific, in your recommendations you are—before we go to the recommendations, I was very surprised when you talked about the IPRC from one part of Metro to the other. In the city that I represent, as you may or may not know, there is quite a co-operative effort in the IPRC process and much sharing of staffing on that, and certainly much sharing of results. Are you making representations on this matter, or are you just accepting it? You would seem to me to be a body who could have quite a bit of input. I am surprised that parents put up with this.

Mrs Nichols: I am sure the other two will want to comment on that, but you will be interested to know that this particular document was prepared by a small group of council and then we sent it out to everybody else. I was just telling my fellow presenters that one of the people representing one of the school boards in fact took exception to us leaving that particular statement in there. They felt the alternative was untenable.

Yet certainly the three of us are agreed that if this is really about children and families primarily, what seems to happen in some cases where the child moves across from the Beaches into ward 1 of Scarborough, or vice versa, then he has to be enrolled in a regular classroom and await an IPRC until it can be determined that indeed he is also exceptional in Toronto or Scarborough, or

whatever, and what kind of programming can be offered. Because the timing is so crucial and families are so mobile, you occasionally hear about children losing a school year's worth of learning, simply because of their waiting times.

Mr Epp: Just as a supplementary, is this because the school boards have too much money and they want to reassess these people again?

Mrs Nichols: Oh, dear. No, I do not think so.

Mr Epp: I know I am somewhat facetious on it.

Mrs O'Neill: It has been answered, Herb.

The Chair: Mr Epp, we try not to be provocative on this committee, somewhat.

Mr Epp: But it does seem that they are reinventing the wheel and I am just wondering why they are reinventing the wheel when it is already there. I know I am somewhat facetious.

Mrs Nichols: No, I do not think it is a matter of they want to spend the money on psychological services, but I think it is because school boards guard very jealously their autonomy, and just because you are gifted in one board, why should you be gifted in another board? Obviously, with some exceptionalities it is not like that because there are very clear-cut medical definitions, but where there can be discussion about the exceptionality and does this qualify as an exceptionality in this board or that board, it really does seem to work that way. That makes life very difficult for lots of families.

You will be interested to know that families often call organizations like Margaret's or mine saying: "I live in North York and we are moving to Etobicoke. What is the situation, given that my child is in a self-contained class? Where should I move to? Should I make the move?" Sometimes families do not accept good job opportunities because they do not want to take a chance on their child not receiving the same kind of service, and that is too bad, because the whole legislation is supposed to be geared to negating geographical differences across the province.

The Chair: I think, in fairness, for a little bit of balance, the confidentiality issue, where a kid is not labelled—we talked about this last time you were here, about the labelling of a kid that stays as a tag on his toe for the rest of his life. There is kind of a re-evaluation sometimes within boards that have different approaches to the thing. In fairness, I think that there is a bit of a balance there, at least in theory.

Interjection.

The Chair: There is an analogy there, and I hope you got it.

Mrs O'Neill: Some parents do actually move for a reassessment. I know that, but I think that is more unusual than usual.

Would you tell me what a child development clinic is?

Mrs Nichols: A child development clinic is a particular structure. As I understand it, the act that governs hospitals in this province in fact says that any fully accredited hospital is supposed to have a child development clinic. What it is is a structure where a number of different professionals—paediatricians, paediatric neurologists, developmental paediatricians, psychologists, speech professionals, etc—can work together, and where they are dealing with a child who is showing some developmental lag in any area of his functioning, there is the one centre or the one unit where the child can be reviewed.

In Ottawa, for example, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario has probably one of the best in the province.

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Mrs O'Neill: You are saying that every accredited hospital is supposed to have that?

Mr Nichols: But in fact they do not. I am afraid I have not gone to the act to check out how strongly worded that is, but when I have inquired of people at the Ontario Medical Association on this one, they did say that it was one of those things that is supposed to be there but is not everywhere.

There is one at the Hospital for Sick Children, there is CHEO, there is the one at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals, which is a very good one, but once you go away from the very large centres, the child development clinic model does not exist, as a result of which, if a child is being sent for a series of assessments, those assessments are still available, but instead of the whole process following one thing after the other, you have to wait for the referral. If the paediatric neurologist will then refer to a paediatric psychiatrist, he has to send a letter; the referral has to sort of click in. It takes a lot of time and very often just delays services to the child and the family quite a bit.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much. I have a lot of other questions, but so do other people.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Dianne, you had a supplementary to that and then we will move to Herb.

Ms Poole: Yes. Actually, this will complete my questioning.

The Chair: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms Poole: Yvonne already asked the one on the IPRC. I would like to follow up what Mrs O'Neil was referring to with the child development clinics in the major hospitals. What I am hearing you say is that it is more the exception than the norm to have them and basically, where they are in the hospitals, it is in your major urban areas. Does that mean that, say, in eastern Ontario beyond Ottawa and in northern Ontario or southwestern Ontario we do not have this type of identification process?

Mrs Nichols: We do in London, but not at the—

Ms Poole: At the children's hospital in London?

Mrs Nichols: I think it is at the Thames Valley Children's Treatment Centre in London, yes, but beyond that there certainly is not the formal sort of setup.

To give you an example, a month or so ago I had the opportunity of doing grand rounds at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie and this subject came up. They were discussing how they could facilitate the whole process for families, because they do not have a formal child development clinic.

I think it really is too bad, because I am sure that some of the costs related to health care in fact are because the referrals are being made in a formal fashion, whereas if you have this, however informal the child development clinic structure is, you do not have to have the formal referrals made every time. I am sure it is not a good use of a paediatric neurologist's time to be writing letters when he could be sitting next to somebody and say, "I'd really like you to have a look at Johnny, because this is what I have found and I would like you to see whether it is a psychiatric or a physical problem," instead of writing letters and duplicating things and so on.

Ms Poole: So there might be a number of hospitals that have an early identification process, it just would not necessarily fit in with the child development clinic concept that you are talking about.

Mrs Nichols: Yes.

Ms Poole: It does not mean there is nothing out there.

Mrs Nichols: No.

Ms Poole: It means it is a different attitude and a different approach?

Mrs Nichols: What I have heard from a lot of parents, though, is that because they do not have that kind of a structure in place at all, the parent very often goes from one specialist to the next

within the hospital and each time has to convince the specialist that there really is an issue here and that this child really does have some very special needs. If the structure were somehow more firmly mandated, even if it was not a completely separate building like it is in the Hospital for Sick Children, it would really help families and speed things up for children, and I think it would be a lot cheaper.

Ms Poole: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr Epp?

Mr Epp: My question was already answered when Mrs O'Neill asked the question.

Mr Neumann: First of all, in commenting on the point that Yvonne O'Neill raised in your third paragraph, I think if one thinks about it, there is not necessarily a conflict in the two goals. It seems to me that with a little bit of thought, one could come up with a number of arguments as to why enhancing the development of the child's full potential contributes to the competitiveness of Ontario in the world economy. Just sitting here I thought of several. I do not want to go into details, but I am sure that one can see those two goals being complementary. I thank you for raising it as a kind of warning that we should be alert to this.

I am going to focus my questioning on the role of the parents. I think you made some very interesting comments about the parent as case manager for the child, and we have been looking at some of the issues relating to that lack of communication you talked about, and the importance of those early years, zero to three or zero to four. Some parents are much better at being case managers and pulling all that information together and taking initiatives in self-referral by going to a family doctor and saying, "Refer me to Chedoke-McMaster," or whatever. Others are more involved in survival income earning and they do not often have the skills or the ability or the knowledge to do that.

When we get to the IPRC process, what help is available now to parents who perhaps are not aware of their rights or maybe need some advice in terms of understanding the terminologies, in understanding the recommendations, understanding what it means to sign the form in terms of placement once the identification is done? Are you satisfied with the parental support that is presently available?

Mrs Walker: There is some parental support from within the school system, but sometimes that does not follow through in terms of all of the necessary information that parents have in terms

of their rights. Within some school systems, we find that staff are extremely helpful in referring parents either to the local parent association or to the provincial parent association, but in other cases they are not.

This week has been one of those weeks that I have been getting phone calls like: "I finally found your name in the phone book by going constantly through. I didn't know you exist; I didn't know other parent associations exist. How can you help me?" So we do work a lot with parents in terms of what information it is their right to take to the IPRC.

We also remind parents that it is their right to have an IPRC, and that if they request it in writing it must happen, because constantly we have parents who tell us that principals and teachers say: "There really isn't a need for you to do that formally, we'll look after your child," and because of the situation that many parents have been in, either having accepted the school system as being informed, knowing about their children, or perhaps they were parents who themselves had a very difficult time within the school system relating to teachers, relating to principals, they are very frightened of the school system and they back off, so we try to offer them help. We will go with them and encourage them to take other people with them to an IPRC, if there are some concerns and problems, and go through all of that, but there are many parents out there who do not know all of that information.

Certainly one of the things that I am sure other associations find is that when children are referred to an IPRC, each board must have a handbook for parents about the IPRC process. It is not being given out, and through SEACs we are constantly reminding boards that it must be handed out. I know in my own board we just had a report back that, depending on the exceptionality, there were some principals who really did not want to give it out at all, so there is still a lot of in-servicing that needs to be done for principals and staff to support parents and to let them know that there are parent associations as well to support them. There is not enough there.

Mrs Elting: I just want to speak for a moment. From the point of view of the school system, all of this contact with parents at some points is very good and in some points could be better. It is not a consistent wonderful through the province and it is not a consistent terrible.

Just for an example, I think in the ideal situation, the teacher of the child or the counsellor of the child will call the parents in or the parents will arrange to meet with that person

and sit down and talk about the child as a behaving child or a learning child, not as a bunch of numbers or a report on a piece of paper. I think there is a lot of exchange in many cases between teachers and parents about: "This is where your child is. This is what he's doing now. What would you like to see for your child? What are your goals? What do you think is missing? How can we help?"

There is a lot of referral to agencies. Just the other day, I spent a lot of time with a father of a learning-disabled 16-year-old and we were able to have a career assessment arranged for that child along with additional learning disability support, but it only happened through a dialogue. I think things have to go beyond the IPRC process and schools and parents have to approach each other as allies and as a team. In the particular school where I work we do see parents as part of our team, and when I go back today I am meeting with three different groups of teachers and parents about their children. This is in the province as well. I do not want you to get the idea that it is all bad.

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Mr Neumann: I was not meaning to suggest it is all bad, but there are parents who do need support and they turn to a variety of sources. Sometimes they do not know where to turn or they do not realize that they can take some initiatives on their own. Often the teacher is the best advocate and is recommending that action be taken to place a child. Sometimes, unfortunately, the placement can be at the initiative of someone in the school who perhaps wants the problem out of the school. I have seen evidence of that. So I think we need advocates for the kids and maybe more assistance for the parents in working their way through the system.

In another area, you mentioned in the final page of your presentation the legislative reviews that are under way. I just want to mention that there are two under way that may or may not have relevance here, just so that you are aware of them. As a follow-up from the Thomson report, there will be a revision of the Family Benefits Act and the welfare act with a view to integrating those systems. Through questioning yesterday, we learned that there is contact between the two initiatives within the ministry that are reviewing the Day Nurseries Act and the Child and Family Services Act and this other initiative to make sure there is some co-ordination. You should be aware of both those initiatives.

The Chair: Excuse me. Could you get to your question? There are other people who are trying

to question and we were late in starting. I hate to bring you kind of to order, but could you wrap it up as quickly as possible, please?

Mr Neumann: That concludes my comments.

Mr Villeneuve: The second recommendation on the last page, "Education and training in parenting skills," intrigues me. What sort of incentive would you provide to those people who think they may need some orientation in parenting skills, who finances it and where does it happen?

Mrs Nichols: Starting with the last one, there are a number of places where it can happen. First and foremost, training and parenting should start when those parents are in school themselves, taking courses in such things as family studies, health education or guidance when they are still in school.

When I was having my own first child, I used to joke about the fact that ideally you should be able to rent a child while you are expecting your first one, make all your mistakes, send it back for laundering and then have your own so that you know what you are doing. But in all seriousness, I think that within the curriculum that is offered within the schools, when we talk about life skills, and everybody talks about life skills being so very important, I cannot think of any life skill that can have such far-reaching impacts upon future generations as teaching parenting skills within the school system. That is item 1.

Second, when you look at the continuing education programs which the school boards and community colleges offer throughout the province, I personally have never seen a course offered in that kind of manner on parenting your exceptional child, parenting your child, how to make your child a successful learner, any of those sorts of things. In the same way that there is clearly a market for, and the availability of, courses in everything from cake decorating to duplicate bridge, I think that we could really provide programming there.

Third, I think that the public health units of this province should have it within their mandate to offer parenting training and parent education, either through formal training or informal training, to the parents. For example, when a young woman or not-so-young woman first goes to the doctor, the clinic or wherever she goes to have the fact that she is pregnant identified, a referral to some kind of training program, offered in the same kind of way as the Lamaze techniques for child birth, could be made.

In terms of who pays for it, I do not think it is unreasonable to suggest that people who can

afford to pay for it make a contribution towards the cost, but if in fact that cannot be done, I am sure there is some way that in that sort of co-operation among the three ministries there could be some way of finding some funds for it. It does not need to be a very expensive proposition. The value is really tremendously great.

Organizations such as ours, such as ABC, and many of the others do offer courses in parent training. In fact, through some of the child care funds and the Premier's health innovation fund, some of the money could be available for the formally structured parenting training courses that organizations offer. For example, the problem for us is that obviously we have to bring people to a central location—you cannot go to every small town—and there is a cost related to that. If we were able to apply for a grant to somebody—and we have tried it and have not been successful—to assist us in doing that, then organizations that do have the structure and the knowhow could be utilized to do it and it could certainly be a fairly cheap proposition, because of course the trainers themselves would not have to be paid. These kinds of organizations typically have volunteers who do the training. So you are just looking at travelling costs.

Those are some of the places where, without creating a whole other infrastructure, parent training could be offered. I think we just need to be a little more creative about it.

Mrs Walker: There were certainly some recommendations in terms of parent training in the early primary education project document because of the numbers of parents who are in very frequently. When their children are in kindergarten and the early grades, certainly they have more contact with the school. They did talk about parent training and parent groups at that time.

Mr Villeneuve: One final short question: Your goal is to empower families. What do you mean by "empower"?

Mrs Nichols: People who are empowered are able to take charge of their lives. Perhaps we could have put it that way, but "empower" seems to be a buzzword at the moment and we want to show that we are really trendy.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you for enlightening me.

The Chair: I very much appreciate your appearing before us. As you can see, your presentation sparked a lot of interest in our committee and we very much appreciate seeing you once again. Thank you.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As we call up the next group, I wonder whether it would be possible to find out from the ministry how many of the high schools which have day care or child care facilities in them actually have them tied into their family studies programs. One would presume they all do, but it would be interesting to know.

The Chair: Yes. And a plug to Sudbury because Sudbury Secondary School pioneered the project of combining those.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As we have been learning more and more, Sudbury is at the heart of all that is good.

The Chair: Yes, that is right.

Mr Jackson: Oh, I would not let that pass.

The Chair: I knew you would not. I was wondering how long it was going to take you.

Mr Neumann: I think that is an excellent suggestion that Richard made, but I would not restrict it to family studies. I would want to know what interrelationship exists between the existence of the program for the children and any other program which goes on within the schools.

The Chair: There is quite a bit of documentation on it. I think it is an excellent idea and I certainly think we can pursue it.

Mr Neumann: —grade 13 sociology or some other courses.

The Chair: That is right.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Especially with the reduction of family studies programs, it might be good to look for other things.

The Chair: We have before us the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association: Charles Recollet, Olaf Bjornaa, Yvonne Hasting and Brad Thompson, who is the education co-ordinator. Charles, the floor is yours and you may proceed when you are ready.

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ONTARIO METIS AND ABORIGINAL ASSOCIATION

Mr Recollet: My name is Charles Recollet. I am president of the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association. The organization represents approximately 200,000 aboriginal people of the province of Ontario residing off reserve. Accompanying me this morning is our association second vice-president, Olaf Bjornaa; Brad Thompson, who is our acting co-ordinator of education programs and services; and Mrs Yvonne Hasting, who is a consultant who worked with us on the preparation of this

document that we are presenting to you this morning.

Before I go on, this is our third appearance before this committee. I always like to make it well known that although we are attempting to seek short-term solutions to some of our problems at this point in time on behalf of our constituents, I think a lot of the members here know that the number one top priority with our association is constitutional reform, getting back to the constitutional table with the Prime Minister and the premiers of this country and also working in the tripartite arrangement with the federal government's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Ontario, the Honourable Ian Scott, in formal discussions on self-government. In other words, we are saying that nothing abrogates or derogates from anything that we are doing in the constitutional forum or arena.

The subject of this paper deals with the needs of the Metis and aboriginal people for appropriate early childhood education. Rather than read the entire text of the paper into the record, I would like to provide a summary statement drawn from the text and spend the remaining time on any discussion rising from the statement or from the text itself.

The Chair: If I might for one second, there is an opportunity for the written brief to be presented as part of Hansard, so we appreciate very much that you are giving a summary, but that the committee can look and will look at the whole brief.

MR Recollect: Just to shorten the time up, you have the entire brief. My summary statement outlines exactly where the pages are and what section I will be referring to. So they have the complete text. I have the summary and different areas which they want a further discussion or questions on, I think we will be prepared to answer. Just as a time frame, you have the full text which is going to be included. It is referred to in my summary as to be included into the record, the entire text.

The Chair: Yes sir, thank you very much.

Mr Recollect: To go on, Margaret Nick, an Inuit leader, has identified the aboriginal point of view on the link between education and identity with clarity and brevity. In the poem on the top of the first page of the text, as stated, to learn only about things and to learn only about the values of the dominant culture and not to know one's own culture leaves a person alienated and disconnected from both the self and the culture with which one must interact on a day-to-day basis.

This gets to the core of the problem facing this select committee on education, that of providing an educational program that helps all children develop a sense of identity which encompasses heritage, nationality and an ability to contribute to the productive nature of our province and country. We believe that children of aboriginal heritage have special needs in this area which are not being met within the existing system. Therefore, we wish to direct the attention of policymakers not only to the need to provide early childhood education, but to ensure that it is culturally appropriate.

We perceive the function of this report is to raise awareness of the need to fuse three areas of knowledge: (1) what we know about early childhood education, (2) what we know about aboriginal culture and (3) what we know about how culture is formally transmitted to our young children. We will draw attention to principles and conditions that should be observed when considering early childhood education programs for Metis and aboriginal people and will emphasize the need for the Ontario government to move quickly to supply quality programs to children of native ancestry in these areas.

We assume that the research studies of the Ministry of Education, together with the large body of knowledge about the importance of early childhood experiences on the character of the developing person, are extensive enough to convince the current government of the need to extend government funding and supervision over early childhood education. The throne speech in the spring of 1989 indicated that the government has the intention to introduce half-day junior kindergarten throughout the province and full-time senior kindergarten where space permits, with a long-term goal of full-time junior and senior kindergartens. We support the intention wholeheartedly.

Our understanding of early childhood education follows the concept of Frederick Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten concept, who saw the formative years as ages three to seven. Using this definition, day care programs that are needed below junior kindergarten, age four, as well as primary programs in grade 2 and grade 3 are to be considered in this report.

The case that we will present identifies that some aspects of the current early education programs are serving the needs of Metis and aboriginal people, but argues that they must become more aware of the need to help create in the child a sense of personal and cultural identity as well as to help introduce the child to the skills

that equip him or her for effective interaction with the dominant Anglo-European segment of Canadian society.

OMAA's own report to the Department of National Health and Welfare for this year makes a point regarding cultural appropriate child care for off-reserve native children:

"It is well known that native children often experience a difficult time in their attempts to fit into the mainstream society. Yet they also feel isolated from their own native heritage as they grow without consistent exposure to that heritage. If their parents do not speak the native language at home or if their relatives and the community at large have drifted away from their aboriginal culture and traditions, the children will not be able to learn about them, internalize their cultural values, and have pride in their heritage. This is so necessary for normal psychological development."

The need: Quality early childhood education programs that are specifically related to the Metis and aboriginal culture must take into account that young children internalize cultural norms, behaviours and perspectives in order to achieve a stable base for a developing self-identity. At the same time, there is a recognition that Metis and aboriginal children will not live their lives in isolation, but will be required to interact with dominant Anglo-European culture on a daily basis.

In existing approaches to early childhood education, the cultural values, norms, behaviours and perspectives are implicitly those of the dominant culture. What is required in considering early childhood programs for Metis and aboriginal people is to identify the assumptions of the dominant society, to retain those which facilitate positive attitudes and interaction between the two cultures and to replace others with approaches that are characteristic of the aboriginal peoples' values and to create an environment which values and consolidates these norms while bridging the gap.

We already know that the early years are critical in establishing a cultural perspective, a positive self-image and positive attitudes to education. Educators are now aware of the crucial importance of children's early years and of the variety of challenges that face families, obstructing both the development of children's ability to learn and their capacity to manage in today's increasingly complex world.

In many areas where the Metis and aboriginal population is in the minority, children often find that the value system of their culture is not

recognized to any degree. The value system of the school and of the school curriculum reflects Anglo-European cultural norms at the expense of the identity of Metis and aboriginal children. For this reason, special attention must be given to building values and behaviours appropriate to the native culture into any early childhood education program.

The teacher/care giver is crucial to the success of appropriate early childhood programs. Because these early years are the time of cultural bonding, the teacher/care giver needs to have an understanding and appreciation of the Metis and aboriginal culture and be able to transmit this appreciation and respect to the child. Careful training and selection of teachers and care givers to enable them to function within the culture and to act as role models is critical. This type of teacher or care giver would also relate well to the community and would act as a bridge between home and school.

This report would be incomplete without drawing attention to the role of poverty as a factor in children's education in our society. Many Canadian children are from very low-income families. Statistics Canada states that in 1986, 1,016,000 children under 16 years of age were members of families whose incomes were below the poverty line. Poverty and its devastating effect on child development is not specifically a native issue. However, many children of native ancestry are affected by this national picture of poverty. Many people of native ancestry have, for historical reasons, often lived in low socioeconomic areas on the fringes of Canadian society.

Numerous studies, including the Report of the Early Primary Education Project of the Ministry of Education, published in 1985, state that:

"There are many...segments of our society that have particular needs for support, both from the school and from the community agencies. These include the children of native people and those from ethnocultural groups new to Ontario, and children of families separated by long distances, especially in rural and northern areas of the province."

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As these studies show, every effort must be made to counteract these negative effects of poverty and meet the special needs of these children. Early childhood education can play an important role in meeting these needs.

The experiences during the formative years of early childhood provide the base for developing personality and character. All experts in the field

agree that this is a period in which rapid learning of basic culture, language, behaviour norms, body language and values takes place, setting the stage for further complex development.

The school system is in a position to support the acknowledgement of a cultural identity and to assist in the integration of that identity into the wider society. The school can do this in many ways; for example, through strongly encouraging parents' participation and decisions about the child's education and through working closely with other community resources. It is likely that teachers and care givers need to be closely identified with the culture and the community so that the cultural perspective is infused into all activities.

Although there is a need to prepare Metis and aboriginal children for future interaction with the dominant society, we feel that this is best accomplished through the support of strong personal identity rather than through adaptive strategies that are aimed at life in school.

In like fashion, focusing on academic skills related to materials that are culturally inappropriate or using a concept or methodology that is foreign to the Metis and aboriginal culture, particularly in early school exposure, often results in having the child develop a concept that school is unrelated to his or her experience or that the child is inadequate and unable to learn.

These are major learning problems faced by a young Metis or aboriginal child. The child may not be ready to learn the concept of being taught, or the material may be totally out of his or her cultural experience. The teacher may be unconsciously using his or her cultural norms in interpreting the responses of the child. In either case, the child assumes that he or she cannot learn. If the situation is repeated frequently, the child begins to withdraw from the whole educational process. This begins the downward spiral of repeated failure and eventual dropping out, accompanied by low self-esteem and personal despair.

Unfortunately, young children by themselves cannot break a negative cycle. Even for adults, breaking a dysfunctional cycle alone is very difficult. Young children have virtually no capacity to understand the cause of their social difficulties and make the necessary adjustments. Adults must intervene by teaching young children more productive peer interactive patterns during ongoing social interactions. We see culturally appropriate early childhood education as an effective intervention.

Before proceeding with our view of the recommendations of this paper, I would like to draw your attention to specific sections of the text.

Pages 12 to 16 provide an overview entitled "Some Aspects of Growing Up Within the Traditional Aboriginal Culture." These comments will provide you with some basic understanding of the differences in the traditional aboriginal approach to understanding the world and interpreting reality. In reviewing it, I think you will find some immediate differences between this approach and your own personal ways of seeing the same things.

Pages 17 to 20 review what we feel are general principles basic to all good early childhood education programs. Rather than review these points, which have probably been brought forward to you by other organizations making presentations before this committee, we simply draw your attention to these points and have them included with our paper.

Pages 20 and 21 outline the important variables that must be incorporated in any early childhood education program. These include the four areas of structure, pace, setting, and nutrition, all of vital importance to the proper learning environment of all children at this level.

Pages 22 to 27 provide a specific outline of what must be done, the application of principles of early childhood education to the needs of Metis and aboriginal people. I will resume my remarks from this section.

We see a need for concentration in eight specific areas:

1. Cultural identity: Cultural identity is a very important aspect of developing positive self-esteem. Every child must be given his or her chance to find the answers to the basic questions of, "Who am I, how do I fit in, and what is my part to play in a pluralistic society?" It is hard for a child who does not know himself or herself and his or her heritage to make the mental leap to the dominant social context. Therefore, a stated emphasis on cultural identity and the culturally sanctioned methods of achieving that identity needs to be built into any early childhood education program for Metis and aboriginal people. Elders and aboriginal people from the community should be integrated into the early education programs as valuable resources and role models.

2. Cultural reinforcement. The school is commonly a reflection of the attitudes and values of the dominant Anglo-European middle-class society. Its orientation in terms of time, routine,

work habits, success and/or failure, materialism, etc., are all components of the middle-class way of life. If the child happens to be raised in a middle-class home environment, it is reasonably clear that this adjustment to the school will be minimal, particularly when contrasted with the adjustment that has to be made by a child raised in a minority and often non-middle-class home environment. In the former instance, the school reinforces the values and attitudes that have been developed in the home. In the latter instance, the traditional approach has been to expect the child to adjust.

Unfortunately, this is more easily said than done. An individual does not suppress, if not displace, his environmental conditioning quite so simply, nor should a child be expected to. It is the system, not the individual, which must change. School must make it possible to reinforce the cultural attributes of all of its pupils. The learning program must try to capitalize upon the strengths of each child, and in this instance this means reinforcing and then building upon the cultural strong points of every child.

3. Cultural models: A child of aboriginal descent may be constantly surrounded with identification models that bear no relation to the child's cultural background. Pictures and information about past and present Metis and aboriginal leaders, artists, athletes, professional people, etc., would help the children learn and appreciate the contributions that have been made and are being made by their own people, and perhaps more important, such models would help to establish the confidence of the individual with respect to his or her concept of himself or herself and his or her capabilities. Materials used with the learning centres should frequently represent the culture of the child.

4. Cultural conflict: It is just as important for the Anglo-European child to grow in his or her understanding and acceptance as it is for the aboriginal child. Through the learning program all children must be given the opportunity to explore the commonalities that bind the human family together and the distinctive characteristics that make groups of people unique.

5. Interdependence: Children must be given the opportunity to expand their awareness of the delicate, often fragile, balance that exists between the human and physical resources of the world. Programs should take the children out into the environment so that they can become aware of and relate to this concept of interdependence.

6. Cognitive skills: The acquisition of cognitive skills relies heavily upon physical, social and

language skills through which children explore the world and display their understanding of it. As with other developmental areas, cognitive skills can play a role in all that children do. Children may or may not talk about what they think or understand, but their understanding can be seen in one way or another in what they do. Understanding changes with what the children do. Therefore, the opportunities that children need for cognitive training are a preponderance of opportunities for active engagement with materials and activities, rather than learning situations that require them to listen and watch.

Because the traditional aboriginal culture is more observant than it is verbal, children of aboriginal descent must be offered language development experience which would build vocabulary and fluency. These prereading skills need to be solidly in place before more advanced reading and writing is undertaken.

7. Flexibility: A child's development does not proceed in a smooth upward climb, but rather in spurts. Children have individual rates of maturation, rates to which their learning needs are closely related. In view of the variability in children's social, physical and intellectual levels of development, flexibility of entrance into and movement through the stages of early childhood education, such as day care, junior and senior kindergartens and primary grades, is considered beneficial to all children and would enable the school to meet more fully the needs of the Metis and aboriginal child.

8. Grade promotion: As the quotations in the text state, grade promotion or too early emphasis on academic achievement can serve to destroy the child's confidence in himself or herself and his or her ability to learn. What is required is the ability of the system to provide the child with the opportunities to translate experiences into the development of concepts. If the individual child's pace at making such adjustments is either faster or slower than the average, the system must be able to deal with those children. Both can affect future academic and personal development needs if not addressed and dealt with.

In summary, there are existing early childhood programs in Ontario that are presently functioning with some success. We feel that these programs, while serving the norm of the dominant culture, are not adequately serving the needs of the Metis and aboriginal people. We believe that our culture and values are being lost to our children. We therefore put forward the following recommendations, which appear on page 28 of this paper:

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All children should have access to child care services regardless of family income and place of residence.

Parents should have authority in determining the extent of their children's participation in early childhood education programs.

Early childhood education should be comprehensive and of high quality and should reflect the values of Metis and aboriginal culture.

Metis and aboriginal cultural values must find expression in approaches taken in dealing with young children of native ancestry.

Teachers dealing with Metis and aboriginal children need special training in understanding the cultural values and the ways they are expressed in everyday life.

Early childhood education programs should: provide physical, emotional, social, creative and cognitive experiences that aim at development of the whole child within Metis and aboriginal culture; play activities should be the way through which the child gains experience and knowledge of the world; in communities with children of native descent, cultural models and materials should be the basis around which many programs are organized; prepare experiences that enable the Metis and aboriginal child to develop a firm grounding in oral language and prereading skills; be culturally appropriate in setting, structure and pace and in meeting with the health needs of each child; provide flexible vertical movement through all stages of any early childhood education program; and, last, use elders and native people as valuable resources and role models to enable the child of aboriginal ancestry to develop a strong personal and cultural identity.

That is our brief to this select committee on education.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Recollet. I must say that, as always, you represent the Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association in a very excellent manner and we very much appreciate having you come to this committee to express your view.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It is good to see you again, Charles, Olaf, with the new assistants that you have got at the table here, and again another good report. I really appreciate it.

I wondered if you know, and I am not surprised if you do not, some of the stats involved around this. Do you know the number of child care operations which have aboriginal languages used, part or all of the day? I am talking off-reserve here. Do you have any idea of the quantity that might be out there at the moment?

We can find it from other sources, I hope, but I would just like to ask you first.

Mrs Hasting: No, I do not know of any exact statistics, but I know that it is not all that common, let us put it that way.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was wondering if it even existed, I guess. Do you know of examples where it is actually happening in the province?

Mrs Hasting: In certain reserve areas it does, and in some off-reserve schools, but this is really limited to the area itself, and if they specifically ask for it and if the school board agrees to it and if the people are there, so it is a very limited situation.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would like to try to get that information, if we can, specifically for off-reserve, because of course there is a whole component within the funding for child care centres which is for bands. That is a different matter, although it would be interesting to see how those are operating as to whether they are unilingual, bilingual or what approach they take.

Mr Bjornaa: I think, as Yvonne was saying, it is very limited, because most of our children in small communities are being bused so far to schools and stuff. Believe me, when you have got a busload of kids and some are dropped off at five schools, it is almost impossible for us to put a figure or anything on it, you know, the way the busing is and stuff. A lot of our kids are leaving so early in the morning and are back home late at night. I think that pretty well answers your question.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Okay. I will see what we can find on that. I would be interested to know if it does really exist out there, because I take your recommendations very seriously in terms of the needs there.

Mr Recollet: Just to comment further, I know there is a national study taking place right now by the Native Council of Canada, which is basically studying exactly what you are asking, because a lot of people do not know exactly if there are day care centres out there for aboriginal people, let alone the majority of society.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the element that you did not deal with here but you did in past reports, and we in fact put it into our last recommendations around the training of teachers, at that stage, to look at ways that we could enhance the number of aboriginal peoples who are actually being trained to go into the classroom? I presume the same problem would exist for early childhood educators. Are there any programs that you know of in the province that

are specifically designed to get us some aboriginal people who are going to be trained to be in the child care centres? Do you know if any of the community colleges are specifically concentrating on that?

Mrs Hasting: Yes, there are programs on that type of thing, but they are not really comprehensive. They may teach about the culture in a factual way, but I do not think the internalization of the culture through practical work with people or children of the culture is carried out to the extent that it should be. It becomes like an academic thing that you learn but you may not carry out. Remember that in many cases there is a big gap between educational philosophies and the actuality of their existence in the classroom.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I can see the need for this sort of assistance to whites who are teaching, but I am talking more of affirmative action here in terms of actually getting more aboriginal people with their ECEs so they can go into day cares and hopefully they would be culturally sensitive. I am sorry, I did not mean to interrupt you.

Mr Thompson: Actually, this has come up in some other forms that we have been involved in. There is currently an initiative under way by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. One of its strategy papers is on native teacher education, the whole broad spectrum of it. It does involve the two elements of properly training and certifying native people as teachers of native people.

The second aspect, as Yvonne mentioned, is people who are dealing with native students. We are finding out part of it is that many of the programs that exist that are specific in terms of training native people for certain roles, whether it is community health workers or day care people or whatever else, are primarily aimed at people attending from reserves, because there is available funding for specific programs through native affairs or whatever else. A lot of those programs are structured so that the candidates for the programs come from the reserve situation, and of course that is where they go back. That is where the demand is, that is where they take their market.

One of the things we are trying to find is ways to help develop the curriculum that all teachers get for dealing with native students, whether that be a native teacher or a non-native teacher. Of course, part of that always comes down to resources. Where do the curriculum materials come from? What is appropriate? What is not appropriate? What is appropriate in northern Ontario as opposed to Kingston?

As we understand it, the government has set up this new Teacher Education Council, Ontario, which I understand is looking at the whole mandate of teacher education. We have approached them as a result of the paper that we have been developing at the MCU level. They have said they will consider looking at native teacher education as an issue, but obviously they have no representation on their council of native people, so what kind of a priority they will put it on we do not know yet, and how broadly they are going to take the issue we do not know either.

It is something we are bringing up at the colleges and universities level as far as the training element is concerned, but even the way that is administered, it is going to involve more than one ministry. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities are involved. Of course, individual universities are semi-autonomous. They have their own say about what they will offer and what they will not. So depending on what level of post-secondary education you are going to implement a program at, you may have to work on an institutional level to see that the individual programs have that appropriate curriculum that addresses the need.

The Chair: There is a supplementary.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One would hope as well they would use elders as part of the training model. I think that would be a useful thing.

Mr Miclash: Actually, my question has been covered. I just wanted to tag on to Richard's question as to what was being done in terms of encouraging native people into the area of childhood education fields. You have sort of answered that by saying that you have approached the Teacher Education Council, Ontario. Are there other things that are being done to encourage this kind of thing.

Mr Thompson: I know of some other individual initiatives. This MCU strategy process has been going on for about 18 months, and I think some of the implications of native-specific programming funding potentials are starting to filter down to institutions. Two institutions are already putting together a joint proposal on native teacher education. That is the Trent University, Queen's University combination. They have actually taken what is in many ways a precedent setting approach of actually inviting native organizations, both on- and off-reserve, which are served by the Trent-Queen's area to meet with them to set up a steering committee to actually establish a program that will meet the needs as expressed by those organizations. But that has been so unique, it was almost unheard of

before. Generally programs are established by curriculum specialists, and then in order to—I hate to say the word “legitimize”—substantiate the value to the native community, a native advisory program is set up with selected aboriginal representatives on a committee to oversee something for which the curriculum has already been set and for which funding has already been determined.

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The Trent-Queen's initiative is a positive step in many ways, but it is one that we would liked to have seen that was not obviously aimed at some potential funding that may be two years coming down the pipe from the ministry. As far as the organizations themselves are concerned, we have been trying to re-establish an actual education department within OMAA. The last one, I think, died out about eight years ago. Technically, we do not have the funding to actually initiate anything on our own. The role we primarily play is co-ordinating the information we receive from the provincial level and encouraging our local and regional communities to address what they find is their particular need in the area of education and then providing them with options on what kind of initiatives are coming down, how they might be able to deal with local and regional school boards, what kind of resources they might be able to access in terms of providing those school boards and individual teachers and students with the resources they need to develop appropriate curriculum.

Even, just as a way of illustrating, in the McKay report, the dropout study report, which as far as I know has not been formally released yet—there have been a number of principals' institutes that the Ministry of Education has been doing across the province in the last six months—they actually have a breakdown of the off-reserve population, as they see it, by level of that population's identification as being native and as looking at certain issues. It suggests that while there may be a very core native-self-identified, native expression group of about 200,000 in the province, estimates are as high as 500,000 or 600,000, as far as people of aboriginal descent who are not resident on bands and who attend regular provincial schools are concerned. Different groups of parents and different students may put higher values on the native culture and content in the curriculum that they might want to see. That affects some of the things we have addressed in here about appropriate curriculum at an age when the children do not become turned off the idea of being of aboriginal

descent. If you have already been told it is wrong to do it when you are in kindergarten, then it is not very likely it is going to re-emerge when you are in high school.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It would be good if we can get some update on the Trent-Queen's situation. Maybe we should do it formally through the ministry, to see where things are at. I would be fascinated to see that.

What about the other side of things? The next group up, the Toronto Board of Education, has done some stuff on this, but I am not sure if others have, and that is the whole question of having teacher aides in the major urban areas where there are large off-reserve populations, to have those people in the classrooms to help culturally sensitize the teacher as well as the students and to be of assistance specifically to the aboriginal kids in the class around their culture and try to do some reinforcement of the culture. Are there many boards in the province that are doing anything on that side of things; in other words, trying to get more teacher aides who are from the community in the schools? Is there anything you can guide us to there?

Mr Bjornaa: Really, we do not have a whole lot of information along with us because, as I have mentioned in a roundabout way, we do not have funding for this. What we are doing here is, like a lot of the other committees that sit in here, volunteer. The thing is we are representing the whole of Ontario for off-reserve, and it is a great expense to us and a great burden on us to make sure our children are well looked after. So some of these questions you are asking us are very hard for us to answer because we do not have the resources and the funds.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I understand that. I was actually presuming you would not have the statistical information, that you might have some anecdotes, some stories, some examples, of where somebody is actually taking some initiative. I am not aware of many myself. That is why I am throwing it out this way.

Mr Thompson: Actually, from what little bit of information we have been able to get from our community-level organizations, it again becomes more of an individual board's initiative to identify a problem. Usually they do not identify a problem unless the community has come forward and identified it.

The last principals' institute meeting in Sault Ste Marie was the first one we attended, talking with school principals at the elementary and secondary levels in that region about the difference in the roles that they allow their native

counsellors to play. Most of the native counsellors that they do have are on recommendations and qualifications through on-reserve specific programs that they have graduated from. But different schools allow those counsellors to play different roles as far as meeting with the students in even a noncounselling role is concerned. It is so variable, it is almost impossible to put a stand on. There is nothing that says that there has to be a resource, and some schools are even leery about using resource people who do not have a specific qualification in a specific area. They may bring you in because they are doing a careers day and you happen to be an aboriginal person who is a fireman or someone who is a lawyer, but on a day-to-day basis it is a little difficult to use.

We even find the same situation at the post-secondary level in the training of teachers to deal with native students, even in native-specific teacher education programs as at Lakehead University. At one point they would loved to have had elders come in as sessional lecturers, but because these people did not even have an undergraduate degree, much less a graduate degree, you could not put them on your faculty and therefore they would not be paid the same. So they were almost a second level of teachers of teachers. They could give you all the information in the world because they lived it and they were still doing it, but you could not guarantee them that they would even be asked back in the next semester to be able to deal with the next group of students.

So at what point do you say that people have a certain life skill or a certain qualification to be able to enhance what a teacher's qualifications are? If the teacher is not able to do it now, but knows of a resource, it is a human resource, it is not a book, so how do you qualify it to get into the classroom on a regular basis to deal with those students? In one way, you can see the board's position. They do not want to let unqualified people guide the curriculum of students.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They do it with other aides. That is why the aides have been a major means of doing that. It is not necessarily the best way. I am wondering if we could—the ministry is taking notes—start to get some idea of what boards are doing, by asking the association of boards if necessary, or there must be some information out of the ministry in terms of what is being done in the province in this area. Thanks very much again for your report.

The Vice-Chair: I would like to thank you, Charles, and your group for again appearing in

front of the committee. As you said, this is your third appearance, and we appreciate your views.

Mr Recollet: There were three appearances before this; this is the fourth one.

The Vice-Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome the Toronto Board of Education to the committee hearings this morning. I might just ask them to identify themselves for the purpose of Hansard, please.

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr Silipo: I am Tony Silipo, the chair of the Toronto Board of Education. With me on my left is trustee Rosario Marchese, who is the chair of our school programs committee, and on my right is trustee Ann Vanstone, the chairman of the education finance committee. I also would like to introduce three of our staff people who are here sitting in the audience: Linda Grayson, the associate director of operations; Marg Evans, who is one of our curriculum superintendents; and Barbara Lampert, who is our child care curriculum adviser. These are people who have been involved in putting together the brief and also people who translate our policies into reality on a day-to-day basis.

I did want to say first of all that we certainly do appreciate the opportunity to make this presentation to the select committee. We have been here before on other issues and we appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today on early childhood education.

Having listened to the last presentation and having found it very fascinating and reflecting a number of points of view that we have taken over the past number of years, I want to mention, as some of your members may or may not know, that we do have in Toronto among our schools First Nations School, which is a school that tries to address and serve the needs of native students and provide a range of programming in the elementary school beginning in kindergarten. I have been told we are now in the process of trying to in fact put together a day care program at the school as well. That is a school which involves the parents in a very fundamental way in the running of the school. The program is delivered, by and large, with teachers who are of native background, native teachers and teacher aides. There is one example of something that is functioning, and if that is an area that the committee is interested in, we would be more than happy to provide additional information on that.

Going to the presentation that we have put together, we want to impress upon the committee this morning that as we move towards the 21st century the provision of high-quality early childhood programs which take into account social changes affecting families must be among public education's highest priorities. If young children are to be given a successful start to their school lives and are therefore able to go on to become productive members of an increasingly complex society, it is essential that an important goal of school programs be the prevention of educational failure.

Prevention requires much-improved services and greater co-ordination among those sharing responsibilities for young children. Prevention also requires changes within schools themselves of the kind envisioned in the Report of the Early Primary Education Project, which was a project of the Ministry of Education in 1985. Unquestionably, the kinds of improvements required to ensure all children's successful start to their educational lives require a substantial enhancement, rather than an erosion, of financial resources for education in this province.

We want to try to make the case for prevention and enrichment. We would ask the select committee to consider these facts. In Ontario approximately one pupil in 20 is referred to a special education identification and placement review committee. As a result, \$400 million is allocated annually to special education programs. On the other hand, the recent McMaster-Chedoke study confirms that approximately one in six children is at risk of poor school performance. However, only \$78 million is allocated annually to compensatory education programs. Clearly current fiscal responsibilities do not reflect support for the 1985 exhortation of the report of the Ministry of Education's early primary education project, which stated, "It is time we made a real effort to shift emphasis from remediation to prevention and enrichment."

Yet a preventive approach to the education of young children has been amply documented as contributing to greatly increased outcomes in school performance and subsequent life chances for children. The early primary education project report makes reference to some of the best-known work in this respect. The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan, shows conclusively that children who received good early education had fewer learning difficulties, lower delinquency rates in later life and much higher productivity, self-sufficiency,

employability and positive participation in economic life than those who did not.

These findings were confirmed in a larger study carried out in New York City's public schools. The Institute for Developmental Studies at New York University's school of education, reporting on an early education enrichment program involving 750 children, showed that children who had participated in the program achieved markedly greater success rates in school and the job market as adults than children who did not take part in the program. The early primary education project reports the authors comments, "Through such programs, not only will we accommodate the future needs of learners, but we will also reduce the placement of children in costly programs, such as remedial and special education programs."

Let us remind you that while the rhetoric is persuasive, and certainly we at the Toronto board are persuaded, provincial fiscal support is currently provided at the rate of about five to one in favour of special education programs rather than prevention and enrichment programs.

We want to talk a little bit about societal changes. The vision of Ontario peopled by families with the following characteristics—two parents, one of whom is engaged in paid work, the other working in the home; English-or French-speaking; enjoying access to an extended family and community members for support; living in an adequate single-family dwelling—is a vision that bears little resemblance to the reality of life for many of the citizens of this province as we move towards the 21st century. Several factors have combined to weaken the stability of the family and to alter the former patterns of extended family and community support. These are well documented. Patterns of immigration, including the arrival of waves of refugees, have radically altered the linguistic composition of our Metropolitan areas.

Isolated from their traditional support systems, parents have been forced to seek help through more formal channels in order to ensure that their children receive the socializing and educational experiences they need for healthy development. The early primary education project put the matter this way, "These social changes have provoked a need for new forms of child care and education, and research has shown that these forms can assist all children, from privileged homes as well as disadvantaged, to develop their abilities to the full."

This point cannot be overstressed. Educators and other professionals associated with young

children now know a great deal more than in the past about the form and content of appropriate programs for young children. If, as researchers demonstrated, these activity-based, enriched programs can enhance the development of all children, what is required of the government of this province is a level of funding for the public education of young children which reflects the realities of family in the late 20th century, not a level predicated on family forms, linguistic patterns and educational knowledge and practices of the past.

What is required is an allocation of financial resources to early childhood education which is in keeping with an understanding that in education we are not compensating for the deficiencies of children. We need to take seriously the injunction of the members of the EPEP team as they undertook their task. "Its members agreed to take a hard and honest look at the world we have created for young children and to attempt to compensate for its shortcomings." Education, in collaboration with other appropriate agencies, has a major role to play in creating environments for children which compensate for society's shortcomings.

Ms Vanstone: I would like to tell you a little bit about early childhood education in Toronto schools. The Toronto board established the first kindergarten in a public school system in Canada in 1884 and its first day care in a school site in 1885. In 1943, in response to the growing recognition that four-year-olds would thrive on an early introduction to school, the board introduced junior kindergarten programs. Today, the Toronto board has approximately 18,000 children in school programs from junior kindergarten to grade 3. In addition, we have 93 day care centres in our schools.

Over its long history the Toronto board has developed policies and practices, and committed substantial resources, to accommodate the needs of a rapidly changing urban population and to reflect the best that was and is known about teaching and learning. Running through our recent efforts are a number of important things which were also reflected in the Ministry of Education's seminal Report of the Early Primary Education Project.

These themes include: a demonstrable and growing commitment to prevention rather than remediation; an ability-driven, rather than a deficit-driven, view of children's learning, that is, an emphasis on what children can do rather than on what they have not yet learned; a commitment to regular assessment of programs

to ensure that there is program continuity and improvement; and a commitment to increased parental participation in the education process.

There follow a number of examples of Toronto board initiatives which illustrate these themes in practice. The substantial and growing costs are attached.

Appraisal for better curriculum: The board's appraisal for better curriculum—ABC—program is designed in part to meet the Ministry of Education requirement to conduct an identification of early and ongoing educational needs and to provide programs and services to meet them. We have recently undertaken a major review and revision of our ABC program and now believe it to be the kind of holistic, child-centred tool that will increase teachers' ability to closely observe children's performance in junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and grade 1 and to plan programs based on these observations. In addition to classroom observation strategies, the ABC program encourages home visits by teachers to help strengthen the links between home and school experiences.

The board's appraisal for better curriculum program has the potential to be genuinely preventive of educational failure, provided adequate resources are available to build on the strengths and meet the needs identified through the program. Annual cost of identification program: \$350,000, not including the follow-up.

Education assistants: In order to support teachers and children in early childhood education programs the board currently provides well over 200 educational assistants as classroom resources. Annual cost: \$3,250,000.

Benchmark program: This recently developed program reports the standards of achievement in grades 3 and 6—grade 8 will follow shortly—in language and mathematics in Toronto schools. The program is based on the ministry guideline *The Formative Years* and reflects the best that is currently known about teaching, learning and evaluation strategies.

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The benchmark program provides information not previously available, in print and videotape, on higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. This new information will be invaluable for teachers' program planning and will help parents to develop an improved understanding of the kinds of performance that lead to academic success. In this way, their ability to join with teachers as partners in the education of their children will be improved. Development costs to date are approximately \$2 million.

Inner-city programs: Toronto's first kindergarten in 1884 and first junior kindergarten in 1943 were established to meet the perceived needs of children from economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In 1966, the board initiated the formal beginnings of its inner-city policies.

In the quarter century since, there has been an enormous increase in the number and geographic diversity of schools within the Toronto board where children benefit from various enrichment measures. The board has long recognized, with policy and financial resources, the need to provide programs which are designed to prevent educational failure.

These measures include:

A staff allocation in excess of 100 teachers to reduce class size in more than 60 schools designated as inner-city;

Increased staff allocation to 10 project schools to allow staff opportunities to engage in detailed and long-term efforts to find improved ways of meeting the educational needs of their pupils. Insights gained in these settings are shared with other schools;

Increased staff allocation to provide for all-day kindergarten programs in a small number of inner-city schools;

Nutrition programs for some of the many children across this city who suffer economic and nutritional need. This currently involved 2,600 kindergarten children in 31 schools;

Summer kindergarten programs currently for 1,600 children in 37 schools across the city; 26 parenting programs used between September and December 1989 by 1,460 adults and 2,460 preschool children; and 47 neighbourhood para-professionals to add further support to inner-city schools and their neighbourhoods.

The annual cost is approximately \$12 million.

Mr Marchese: The Toronto Board of Education puts a lot of emphasis on professional development and that too is very costly. Societal change and current knowledge about child development and the teaching/learning process require that teachers have access to professional development opportunities of the highest calibre. As it says in *Towards the Year 2000*,

"Because of the trend towards greater community involvement with schools at all levels, teachers must learn to work more closely with parents and other educational groups and they will need to be aware of, and prepared to put into practice, new theories of learning and new learning styles."

The Toronto board takes seriously the need for teachers to remain current in their knowledge and practice. Many opportunities are afforded each year for teachers to engage in professional development activities related to all aspects of program. In addition, strong consultative support is provided to early childhood education teachers and child care providers by an early childhood education co-ordinator, five consultants and four child care advisers. The cost is \$1 million.

Day care centres: Child care programs have had a continuing history in Toronto schools since 1885. By 1980, almost 50 programs were operating in our schools. Today the number of programs stands at 93. Notwithstanding the board's ongoing commitment to day care, a number of substantial difficulties remain.

As class sizes shrink and school enrolments increase, the Toronto board is facing very serious space shortages. Our projections indicate that a significant number of schools now housing child care centres in so-called vacant space will again require the space for academic programs. We are in serious need of funding for expansion and renovation. Without this funding, the security of tenure of child care programs may be jeopardized. How can we account for the government's willingness to fund day care centres in new schools but its total lack of financial support for existing programs with serious space difficulties?

From a program point of view, much would be gained by the Ministry of Education amending the Education Act and providing additional special funding to enable boards of education to directly and indirectly support child care services. This arrangement cannot be made at the expense of our regular day programs and must not be charged against the already stretched education dollar. In this way, the needs of young children of all ages could be addressed through a co-ordinated, integrated service at a cost of \$500,000.

Because of its position as a large urban board, Toronto, perhaps sooner than some others, has had to come to grips with the impact of societal changes on school and young children. To do so has required a powerful political will and the concomitant allocation of substantial financial resources.

While we are proud of our accomplishments, we are in no doubt whatsoever that much more is required if we are to realize what must be, we have argued, a central goal of education in this province, provision of early childhood education programs of the highest quality, designed to

ensure the success of all children. No less a goal is acceptable for either the individual child or the society at large. The full realization of this goal requires a substantial adjustment of provincial fiscal priorities. Let us all understand that it is not possible to separate the question of financing education from the issue of quality programs for young children.

Mr Silipo: The only other thing I would add is that we appended to our presentation the recommendations that we presented in the brief that we gave to the early primary education project back in 1984. We thought that might be of some use.

Ms Poole: As usual, the Toronto Board of Education has come up with some very helpful ideas and we do appreciate that.

I would like to start with your page 1, where you quote the statistic of \$400 million being allocated annually to special education programs. You are using that statistic in support of having more money put into prevention and enrichment rather than remediation.

I am assuming that \$400 million to special education includes what the provincial government commits to enrichment and to gifted programs. Do you have any idea what proportion of the \$400 million would go into that type of thing, which I think is preventive? If you do not, that is fine. It is not your business to know it and we can get it from the ministry.

Mr Silipo: I do not think I know it.

Ms Vanstone: I would imagine it does, though. It is the provincial government's expenditure on special education, so that would have to include gifted, I think.

Ms Poole: It might be interesting to find out that figure. As I say, I consider that to be preventive.

Ms Vanstone: But it is only IPRC gifted, so it would not be just enrichment as well.

Ms Poole: Right, so this is just special needs children identified by the IPRC.

Mr Silipo: I suspect it would not be a very large chunk of that.

Ms Vanstone: Yes. It would be very small, I would think.

Ms Poole: Going back to the identification, which on our committee we have considered to be a very crucial factor in identifying the problems that young children may be having to cope with, you have mentioned your appraisal for better curriculum, which really focuses on identification. Can you give us some details of

how that program works, apart from of course having some home visits that the teacher might initiate and apart from having special assistance?

Mr Silipo: Sure. I think it would probably be more useful if we asked one of our staff people to give you that, because it would be a much more informed description than we could give.

The Chair: Perhaps you could come up so you will part of the Hansard process. Could you just identify yourself, please?

Ms Evans: My name is Margaret Evans. I am the superintendent of curriculum with the Toronto board. I would be pleased to make some general comments about our ABC program and would of course be prepared to provide some print material if that would be helpful to you. We do in fact have a package that describes in some detail our ABC program.

Basically, though, our ABC program allows, encourages and I think requires teachers to do extremely close and detailed observation of the children in their classrooms. It is an observation of children's strengths. In other words, we observe the whole range of intellectual, physical and, to whatever extent we can, social development of youngsters in junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and grade 1, in all three of those years.

The observations are detailed. They eventually take a written form involving as part of the process the coming together of the teaching staff, consulting staff and the principal of the school to look at the patterns of ability in a given class and allow that grouping of people to plan what is an appropriate program for that particular group of children, given the observations that have been made of the children.

What is a particular strength of the ABC program is a very skilful observation by teaching professionals of the abilities of young children, and we believe that that distinguishes the approach that we take to ABC, as we have called it in the brief, an ability-driven view of education, rather than the more traditional and we believe less useful view that is deficit-driven, what it is kids cannot do. Our approach focuses quite specifically on what young children can do.

1210

Ms Poole: Does this program require a mandatory training of the teachers who are involved in it so that they will have the skills for observation and identification? Is it a mandatory training?

Ms Evans: Yes. The teachers involved in our ABC program are provided with training in the

use of the materials that are associated with the program. That is done very much on a school-based basis. We do much of work in Toronto on a school-based model, because we believe the teachers of any particular group of children are in the best position to make those decisions. But the training is provided, yes.

Ms Poole: I really commend you on initiating that program. As usual, the Toronto Board of Education has been quite advanced and progressive in initiating some of those programs that are so helpful.

My final question, of course, will go very close to my heart. Members are waiting for me to ask this one, and it is regarding the stability of day care in our schools, particularly in situations like the city of Toronto and other areas of the province where our older schools are encountering a large influx of enrolment and our day care is very vulnerable.

We have had several presenters come to the heart of the fact that the local school boards are not mandated to spend moneys on child care. If this mandate were given to school boards, how do you see the relationship between school boards and the province as providing this child care, and would you personally favour this kind of change in the regulations to allow school boards to have the mandate to look at child care?

Mr Silipo: I think we would. I think that historically our position has been that there is a great deal of sense in school boards being involved and even having the jurisdiction to deal with child care. It is perhaps not as clean-cut as that, and there certainly are other implications that would need to be worked out, but certainly that is something that I think we would support.

The space question is one which is a problem now and is going to continue to be a problem for us, given the large number of child care programs in our schools and given that you have identified the fact that we have a space crunch for all sorts of other things as well. While that pressure is going to drive us in some cases to have to question whether in fact we can continue to guarantee that child care programs will be housed in school sites, our preference certainly would be to be able to continue to do that and do everything possible to do that, which comes back to the question of having the kind of financial resources necessary so that in fact we can deliver on those objectives, because on a program basis, we have no doubt whatsoever that the link makes absolute sense and that schools are the best place for child care programs to be located.

Mr Marchese: If I may add to that, part of the desire of our boards that talk about wanting to have early education in our schools is to deal with the issue of equity and to deal with the issue of equal outcomes for our children. In the past, we have been bombarded by parents who complained about unequal treatment and the streaming of children. We feel that such a program as early childhood education for all children would help us to prevent the kinds of problems that we later have to deal with once children get sorted out in terms of the kinds of high schools they end up in. This is a way of addressing the larger issue that our system has to always focus on, and that is equal opportunity, equal outcomes for all of our children.

Ms Poole: Yes, and it fits in with the preventive mode.

Mr Marchese: Absolutely.

Ms Poole: Just one last point on that. If we were able to work out a co-operative model between the province and the school boards, I would think what would definitely have to be built in there is some guarantee for the stability. I cannot see the province wanting to commit funds to the child care facilities in schools and then to find in five years there is a sudden influx of enrolment and the day care is once again vulnerable.

Mr Silipo: Anything that would be done to bring the child care programs more directly under the overall responsibilities of the school board would immediately take away that doubt, I think, because in fact it then would become very clearly part of the responsibilities and would have the same claim to space as any other program that we would bring in.

Mr Marchese: We have done a recent review of our child care programs, and what we have stated is that as far as we are concerned, child care is a legitimate function of the educational system, and we have stated that as a policy question for us. What we have done as well is to try to ensure stability for our child care programs in spite of the odds and in spite of the problems. So we are doing our best now within our own ability to control the conditions, but certainly if we get into an arrangement of the kind you are talking about, presumably we would be guaranteeing that kind of stability.

Ms Poole: And it would be nice to be able to do it legitimately and legally.

Mr Marchese: Absolutely.

Ms Vanstone: As the person who has been chairing several podiums in north Toronto with

Dianne around this issue, I know exactly what she is feeling.

I think one of the difficulties we have right now is that if we do need the space for educational purposes, we are going to have to take it. In practice, we are not going to take it, but our comprehensive care policy, for example, says that school space must be used for educational purposes, and if there is any left over, it can be used for day care. I think that is why our board is seeking some sort of a link so that we are not all the time trying to tread on some rather fragile eggs.

Mrs O'Neill: I presume that your board is one of the 12 boards in the province that has a co-ordinator for child care.

Mr Silipo: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Would you have more than one?

Mr Silipo: We have one co-ordinator and we have a number of consultants.

Mr Marchese: Four.

Mr Silipo: Four child care consultants.

Mr Marchese: Advisers.

Mr Silipo: In addition to the co-ordinator.

Mrs O'Neill: So they would be spread throughout the system as well?

Mr Marchese: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: I presume from what you are saying that you are working with boards like Ottawa in dealing with getting some kind of licensing or—what should I say?—mandated co-operation. Would that be true?

Mr Silipo: We certainly have co-operated in the past with boards like that, and other boards, on this issue. I guess the last kind of province-wide look at that was the early primary education project. Other than some peripheral discussion, I am not aware that there has been any real considered effort since that time to try to address some of these.

Mrs O'Neill: I did receive correspondence this week which I intend to table in the committee, from an association of school boards that wants to be involved in licensed day care. I presume you must know of that, or be first.

Ms Vanstone: I actually have had many, many conversations with Kathy Yach about it.

Mrs O'Neill: I wondered if you would say a bit more about compensatory education programs. Certainly your brief talks to this very distinctly. I know your financial provision and how you get no grants and all of these other things. Would any of these programs you have

outlined for us qualify for the grants? As I understand, the grants flow from your demographics and these would be programs that would qualify if you were not in the heaviest estimate area.

Mr Silipo: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Other boards in the province may have some of these kinds of things and would actually be getting funding for them? I guess I am thinking of boards in isolated or northern communities.

Mr Silipo: I would think so, yes.

Mrs O'Neill: Would you like to say more about the general subject of compensatory education?

Mr Marchese: I think what compensatory education tries to recognize is that some students come into the educational system unequal, based on the kinds of problems they suffer through, and perhaps the home environment and into our societal environment. The idea of providing compensatory education is to bring them to the same level as some of the other students who do not bring the same kinds of problems. That is what compensatory education tries to do.

The point we are making about it is that we need to be able to talk about programs that prevent things from happening so that we do not have to provide compensatory education, or remediation, which sometimes works, and on the whole it is very expensive.

1220

Mrs O'Neill: Each of these programs you have outlined is what you would consider that type of program?

Mr Marchese: That is right.

Ms Vanstone: But there are more aspects to compensatory education. English as a second language, for example, is part of a compensatory ed approach.

Mrs O'Neill: And I suppose some of your programs in—whatever you want to say, nutrition supplements—would also be part of that.

Mrs Vanstone: A little bit. There is an edge of it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They are not recognized under compensatory grants provincially.

Mr Marchese: That is right. No, they are not.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They would be different in kind and—

Mrs Vanstone: The nutritional programs? I know. Our nutritional programs we sort of run with a private foundation.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But I think that they need to be part of that liberal formula.

Mrs Vanstone: I do too.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Hopefully, when the review which is under way takes place, we will see that change again.

Thanks very much for the presentation. I have a number of very specific questions. Let's see if I can get some clarification. We got some statistics yesterday on the percentage of children in child care in the schools versus other kinds of child care and versus the overall number of students in the schools. I would just presume from your figures, and I want to ask you to be more precise, that you are doing much better in percentage terms than almost anywhere else in the province that I have noticed. When you say you have 93—

Mr Marchese: We have 93 programs—

Mr R. F. Johnston:—how many children are from the primary section? You use that figure of 18,000 in the primary division, and I am wondering how many of those are actually—

Ms Vanstone: Yes, but that would be the number of day care—

Mr Silipo: About 3,000 students.

Mr R. F. Johnston: In total. Have you any idea how many of the 3,000 would be from that primary division? Any idea?

Ms Vanstone: No. Does anybody have that?

Mr Marchese: More or less.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The very rough figures on that.

Ms Lampert: A third to a half.

Mr R. F. Johnston: So that would be 1,500 or so, let's just say, for argument's sake, out of 18,000. That would still be better in comparison to anything I think we have seen in terms of provincial figures.

I always wonder what is happening to those others, those other children that are not making use of the school, where they are going, especially the JK and the half-day kids. I just wondered if it is possible to get the figures on that. I would be very interested to see what the breakdown looks like.

Ms Vanstone: We can certainly provide those figures.

Mr R. F. Johnston: They gave us an interesting table with the infants and the toddlers, etc.

Ms Vanstone: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Going back to the question I asked of an earlier group, do you have any idea of the high schools that have child care? How many of those are tied into the family studies programs that have a hands-on kind of parenting skill program?

Ms Lampert: Actually, all of our childhood care programs have a tie-in to family studies programs. We have a policy called the co-operative learning centre whereby students from high schools actually do some of their placements in child care centres. It relates to all of the child care centres.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Could you send us that policy?

Mr Marchese: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am just very interested to have a look at it.

Mrs O'Neill: It is a fairly common policy, I think, with the co-op component.

Mr R. F. Johnston: But I think it would be interesting to see how thoroughly it is put forward. You say all of your—

Ms Lampert: All of the child care centres that deal with children under the age of five. If it is just children six to 10, then they mainly operate after school, so it is really not appropriate for the high school students to do a placement there, although many of the high school students actually get part-time jobs in a child care program facility.

Mr R. F. Johnston: As aides.

Ms Vanstone: Were you asking as well how many of our high schools have child care programs located in them?

Mr R. F. Johnston: That would be a sensible question.

Ms Lampert: We actually just have one location.

Ms Vanstone: It is very different from some parts of Metro.

Ms Lampert: Although we do have three other child care programs that cater to students, there is only one that is actually in the high school at this point.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Interesting. That is quite different from some other areas.

You have a special parenting program you mentioned as part of your inner-city work that you have been doing over the years. You mentioned 27-something over a period of time.

Ms Vanstone: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I was wondering if there is any more information on those programs and any evaluation you have got.

Ms Vanstone: I believe we have printed information on the parenting programs that we could send to you. It seems to me that through this kind of program we have seen some really valuable links develop between the home and school in some of the areas where it was hard to forge those links. I would really like to see it—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do have any idea of the numbers that were involved or anything like that?

Ms Vanstone: Does anybody know about the numbers in the parenting programs?

Ms Evans: Yes, it is in the report, on page 9.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is over a course of two years, right? So at any given time, there are how many? That was what I was not clear about from that statistic.

Ms Evans: I am not—it is hard to say.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Sorry, but does that mean you would have me back up into—

Interjection.

Ms Vanstone: That is between September and December 1989, and that is a one-year—

Ms Evans: I think that would be a reasonably accurate figure. On any given day I think it would not be dissimilar from that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Have they been going long enough for you to have done any kind of an evaluation of them in a systematic way?

Ms Evans: They have been going for several years, and the evaluation that we do is that we keep having more and more of them and more and more children and parents being associated with them. They are a very successful part of our board's arrangements.

Mr Marchese: If I can make a comment, because the previous speaker touched on some of these, many of our parenting programs involve our Chinese parents, for example, or Portuguese parents in a great way, and they involve the grandparents because a lot of them are the care givers in many of our communities, and it has been a tremendous link between the school, the child and the grandparent and in some cases the parent. It has involved them. It is a way for them to understand the system and it is a way to expand the kind of role that we want for parents in terms of involvement. It is a wonderful experience.

Ms Vanstone: It has also helped some parents in some areas get involved in literacy programs. Actually, there are some of those programs—there is especially one I can think of—that the

members of this committee might like to visit. I know the Minister of Education visited a few years ago and was really fascinated by it. I suspect that these programs are unique to Toronto.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I would really be very interested in following them up, and I imagine other members of the committee will be too. I guess I would like some more idea of some of the evaluations you have done of your inner-city programs. I have seen some reports, but not for a number of years now, on some of the inner-city initiatives in Toronto. For instance, the ABC process of home visits, etc, has been going on for how long now?

Ms Evans: We have had them formalized for three or four years, I think; informally for rather longer than that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Has there been an evaluation of that in terms of what has worked best, the development guidelines and things like that?

Ms Evans: Yes. We now have a written guideline which reflects the experience that teachers and parents have had with home visits that is provided to all of our staff members involved so that they can have benefit of the experiences that their colleagues have had.

As far as numbers are concerned, again, each year we have more teachers and parents coming together in the visitation arrangement, which, to us, simply indicates the fact that it is a valuable resource to the school system.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about the full-day kindergarten, which again you are major initiators of in the inner-city school area? I cannot remember how many there are.

Ms Vanstone: There are 10.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you have any analysis of the take-up of that offering? It is not mandatory, right?

Ms Vanstone: We only do offer it in 10 schools in the most inner-city schools. It is very difficult for us to staff, but I should imagine in those communities where it is offered, the children all attend the full-day kindergarten. Would that not be the case?

Ms Evans: Yes.

Mr Marchese: It would not be a problem filling them. Is that what you are asking?

Ms Vanstone: No.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is what I am asking. Is the response one of everybody wanting it or—

Ms Vanstone: They would be open to children in that catchment area. I do not suppose they would be open to others.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is the total number in the 10?

Ms Evans: About 450.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Are there any other ongoing sort of evaluations in longitudinal fashion of some of the initiatives you have taken? I am thinking, especially in terms of the inner-city and especially as we see compensatory grant changes coming down in the next little while, it would be nice to be able to look at some of your models which have been going on for a longer period of time.

Ms Evans: Each of our project schools which is named in here is required to undertake an evaluation component, a before and an after. Each of them does so and each of them is able to demonstrate over the period of its life as a project school the improvements that have resulted from their efforts. Each of them has succeeded in doing that. Always there has been some positive result as far as pupil outcomes are concerned as a result of that work. We keep it deliberately quite informal. We do not see a high value in making the evaluation component a leading edge of the work, as perhaps you might understand, but it is a component of all of our work.

1230

Mr R. F. Johnston: One of our biggest problems as a committee is the lack of Canadian data on most aspects of education, especially when we start to make an argument for the front-end loading money rather than having it go into special education or mediation. You are making an argument that the paucity of information in terms of what works and what does not work allows the government to do what it has done recently, to announce these 25-year plans rather than moving systematically. It is frustrating trying to take that on.

Ms Vanstone: One of the things we have done recently that should be of interest to this committee is our benchmark program. From now on, we will have an ability to look at this snapshot in 1989 and see how our children were performing compared to an average performance, say, in 1995. At this point, tracking through student outcomes, of course, has been something that has been very difficult to do. At least the Toronto board will now have a way of doing this.

Since we have developed the program, and will start using it next year, it is clear that people in other jurisdictions around the world have had

the same problem we have, because we have had a tremendous amount of interest expressed from other jurisdictions in the benchmark program.

Mr Villeneuve: Thank you very much for a very thought-provoking presentation. Certainly you people are on the leading edge and pioneers in day care and kindergarten. When I saw 1885, over a century—

Ms Vanstone: That was very much an inner-city intervention at that time, I think.

Mr Villeneuve: I am sure it was.

I am interested, again, in the parenting program. Is that a pretty rigidly structured affair, or is it basically people learning the reading skills?

Ms Vanstone: It is not very structured.

Ms Evans: It is remarkably unstructured, in the sense that the agenda for building the skills of the parents who come is set by the participants. It is not a course. It looks nothing like a course in the traditional sense, but it is a set of arrangements whereby the particular skills and interests the parents bring to the experience are what are used by the people working with them to try to develop their skills. It would bear no resemblance to your notions, if you had them, of a traditional course content with units following units. It is not that kind of arrangement at all.

Mr Villeneuve: That is probably one of the reasons it is so attractive.

Ms Evans: Yes.

Mr Silipo: Exactly.

Mr Marchese: I should say that the people we hire reflect the predominant community of the school. That is, again, a way of linking up with the people you are serving so that the program works more effectively.

Mr Villeneuve: The 47 neighbourhood para-professionals that you have, these are people who are on staff? Are they volunteering? What is the arrangement?

Mr Silipo: They would be people who would be on the staff of those schools, not as teachers but as, in effect, teacher's aides. Again, as Mr Marchese was saying, they would likely in many cases be people who come from the immediate community or reflect the community around it and assist in the classroom with the teacher.

Mr Villeneuve: One final alarming statistic is that 2,600 kindergarten children require nutrition. We are talking about junior and senior K? It is limited to that, and in grade 1 this is no longer—could you just elaborate?

Ms Vanstone: That is not entirely true.

Mr Silipo: I am just trying to see where the numbers are.

Mr Villeneuve: Page 9.

Mr Silipo: I think what we have given you is the numbers of kindergarten children. There certainly are a number of other children who would be involved in programs similar to that. We have just taken from the figures and just—

Mr Villeneuve: We can hit our head against the wall trying to look after the teaching and the learning requirements, but I think sometimes we overlook the physical requirements. I certainly give your board credit for addressing that and I would hope it is not limited to just the K classes.

Mr Silipo: No, absolutely not.

Ms Vanstone: The ability to have it extend beyond that, beyond the kindergarten grades, is only limited by a principal's lack of creativity, I guess. Principals get a certain amount of money, and what they do with it is interesting.

The interesting thing about the program we have is that it is not simply a feeding program, it is an educational nutrition program, so perhaps it will have some long-term benefit. It would be really an important part of compensatory education, it would seem to me, if educational nutrition were considered to be fundable. You have to give them food to eat, because you cannot teach them about it in the absence of food, especially when they are hungry, but as a compensatory education mechanism it would be extremely useful.

Mr Villeneuve: I gather your board—and you

are the envy, I would say, of all boards, certainly the envy of the boards that are in the riding that I represent, because we are very much assessment-poor in relation to you. However I gather the nutrition end of things is not funded by the province, so you would be one of the very few boards looking at that particular angle of it.

Ms Vanstone: IN The Toronto board, we set up a private foundation to deal with this, because it was skirting a little too close to the edge of the act to deal with it. The private foundation is called the Toronto Educational Opportunity Fund. I served as its president for several years and we raised money from many sources to carry on this program. The board also contributes a little money to this foundation as a purchase of service from the foundation. The foundation board has got a few trustees on it, a few staff on it, and the rest are private.

Mr Villeneuve: Most interesting and enlightening. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, and I very much appreciate your appearing before the committee.

Before we adjourn, we do have a homework assignment for tonight, from my teaching hat. You will be getting the first round of our discussion paper in draft form from Bob this afternoon. We will make 2:15 our starting time. I am preaching to the converted here, because you were all here, but would you please try to do that?

The committee recessed at 1237.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1417 in committee room 1.

The Chair: I would like to welcome the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, Helen Penfold, Joan Westcott, Nancy Wannamaker, Anne Wilson and Susan Owens. This is the largest presenting delegation we have had, so we very much appreciate your being here today. We also know that it was within a very short time frame that you were notified that we were trying to deal with this issue. We very much appreciate your making yourselves available to us because of the committee's interest in all aspects of early childhood education.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Stop them from attacking us.

The Chair: Of course. I just wanted to pre-empt a bit but I know the comments will be appropriate, so I will turn it over to you. Please proceed. You will have your full time, by the way.

FEDERATION OF WOMEN TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Ms Penfold: It is a pleasure for us to be here today, and I think you can probably see by the number of people that we have with us that this topic is certainly one that is very near and dear to our organization.

For purposes of the record, I would like to introduce the people who are here today, and we will all be involved in the presentation. First of all, on my right, Anne Wilson, who is the senior vice-president of our organization; on my left, Susan Owens, the first vice-president; at the far end of the table, Joan Westcott, executive director of FWTAO, and on my far right, Nancy Wannamaker, who is executive assistant with our organization.

The Chair: Just before you start, as there are other presentations, if you would kind of share that mike. Apparently we had to do some different miking around, so if you will, just so that your comments are recorded in Hansard.

Ms Penfold: I think many of you will know that our organization has a real history of advocacy for early childhood education. We have presented numerous briefs and other kinds of documents to government and other groups for many years. In the brief we have given you today, in appendix A, is a list of many of the documents that we have already produced on this

topic. We have brought some documents with us today which we hope you will also find useful in your deliberations about early childhood education.

Our organization is composed of people who are active lobbyists and we have been active lobbyists about quality experiences for children in those early years. We know about the importance of the environment for the child in the early years of education. When we are talking about early childhood education in our brief, we are talking about the years from junior kindergarten through to grade 3.

Just a little bit of information about the number of people in our organization who are concerned with early childhood education. Our statistics show us that 42.7 per cent of our members teach in the JK to grade 3 years, and as you know, we have over 37,000 members now. Of those people who are teaching those grades, besides their basic teacher education, in addition to that, 30 per cent of them currently teaching primary grades hold a specialist certificate either in primary education or in early childhood education. In addition to those specialists, a very great number of our members hold other kinds of specialist qualifications, for example, in reading or physical education or special education, so we have a very well-qualified teaching force in Ontario working with children in that age group.

We certainly agree with the comments made by the Premier (Mr Peterson), who said that he believes in getting things right at the beginning and the importance of the early years of the child. We as professional educators believe that we know a lot about how children learn and how children learn in those early years. We know a lot about what we think the environment should be in which that learning can take place, so we certainly applaud the choice of this select committee to look at early childhood education.

We welcome the 1989 throne speech initiatives because we believe they are sending a very positive signal out to the community about the importance of the programs in the early years.

Throughout our brief, you will see that there are really five principles that we consider to be underpinnings in all that we have to say about early childhood education: that active, play-based learning is appropriate for young children; that class sizes need to be reduced in the early years of schooling; that quality education means access to resource-rich classrooms and well-

qualified teachers; that parents should have access to child care services, some of which are in our schools, and that funding should reflect the importance of education in the early years.

Just a little bit about the process now in our presentation: We are going to go directly to the recommendations and each of us is going to speak about some of those recommendations. You will find those then, if you would like to turn to them, on page 43.

The first recommendation we talk about is that school boards look upon half-day junior kindergarten and full-day, everyday kindergarten programs as an expanded opportunity to provide a learning environment where a child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs are met rather than an opportunity to speed up the child's academic progress.

One of the documents that we have brought for you today is this one that we have produced, *Active Learning in the Early School Years*. In here we talk about what we believe are the fundamental issues that should be addressed in active learning so that children may have that experience in their early years.

There is much evidence to suggest that the quality of a child's early experiences affect the child's ability to learn in the long run. FWTAO has long been committed to the philosophy of personalized and individualized programs for young children within a curriculum designed around play. It is the policy of our organization that a curriculum designed around play provides young children in school with the opportunity to achieve optimal development in an active learning environment.

FWTAO speaks strongly about the young child in lifelong learning. The children of today are really the same as the children of yesterday. They go through the same developmental stages, but what has changed is the society and the environment in which they are living as they proceed through those developmental stages. We believe that is why it is so important that we address that in the early years.

Ms Owens: I would like to place the next three recommendations in two contexts: one, the consistency of FWTAO's messages over the past 10 years in response to a variety of reports to the ministry and, two, my personal experience with the early childhood years, specifically junior kindergarten.

One year ago last September, I was principal of a school that welcomed, for the first time ever, 104 junior kindergarten students. Almost all of the students were bused, they were housed in

converted grade 1 classrooms, and the board's growth factor, plus the implementation of JK, meant that the school had 11 portables to accommodate almost 700 pupils. I might add that the efforts of the board, including in-school-hours staff development training, the excellence of the teaching staff and the supportive involvement of the parents ensured that our 104 junior kindergarten children had access to a quality learning environment.

FWTAO is encouraged by the 31 January 1990 ministry announcement of a \$2-million incentive fund to help school boards beginning to offer JK programs. The \$3,000 grant per classroom will be of assistance, but it does not in any way adequately meet the funding level needed to properly equip a JK classroom. The ministry news release mentions a climbing apparatus, sand and water tables as pieces of appropriate learning equipment. These three pieces of equipment alone cost approximately \$1,600, more than half the amount of the incentive funding. The cost to equip a JK classroom with essential learning equipment—and believe me, we have worked through this—is closer to \$10,000.

FWTAO has lobbied actively for government action to provide a quality learning environment. If we wish to get things right at the beginning, then the government has to make a greater financial commitment to ensure sufficient large physical space, adequate learning resources and equipment and small class sizes. FWTAO has been lobbying for this commitment for the past 10 years. FWTAO therefore recommends that the provincial government provide adequate funds for junior kindergarten programs to ensure sufficient large physical space, adequate learning resources and equipment and small class sizes.

At present, school boards have been asked to provide full-day kindergarten classes if space permits. FWTAO has long promoted the concept of full-day everyday kindergarten, based on the positive research available and on the special needs of young children. We believe space alone cannot be held as the critical component as to whether a class should exist when parents and children need the program. We also believe parental expectations have indeed been raised by the throne speech. Therefore, FWTAO recommends that adequate funding be provided to assist in providing necessary resources and equipment for full-day kindergarten programs.

1430

As early as 1975, the annual meeting of our federation, recognizing the importance of small-

er classes, passed the following statement: "It is the policy of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario that no elementary class should exceed 15 students in number at the junior kindergarten level, 18 students in number at the senior kindergarten level...."

FWTAO was very pleased when the government set class sizes of 20 students for grades 1 and 2. This decision sent a signal to the education system and to society as a whole: The number of children that a classroom teacher has responsibility for is a key variable in achieving our educational goals. Class size is important. However, the job has not been finished. The government has yet to set class sizes for junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten classes. Many boards continue to overload these classes of young learners. There is much inconsistency in the teacher-pupil ratios for junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten classes across the province. The fact that such classes are not mandatory like grades 1 and 2 and therefore parents send children on a voluntary basis is not a rationale for inaction in reducing class sizes.

We know that quality education involves more than smaller classes, though it is certain that many benefits arise from small classes, such as an increase in teacher-pupil contact time, pupil access to more space, a higher pupil level of self-worth, fewer discipline problems and an increase in teacher time to observe each child and to meet each child's needs. Therefore, FWTAO recommends that the provincial government establish maximum class sizes of 18 students in senior kindergarten and 15 students in junior kindergarten and provide incentive funding to assist school boards in moving towards this goal.

Anne Wilson will continue.

Ms Wilson: Our Ontario children need many school support services, such as materials and resources for learning centres, preparation time for their teachers to plan programs and to communicate with parents and their colleagues, positive equipment for active learners. They also need the system's support—resource personnel, appropriate transportation services, speech programs and other special-needs programs. Most school boards are consistent in their policies regarding these supports for the compulsory school ages, grades 1 to 8. All too often, JK and SK teachers are not guaranteed adequate planning time or classroom learning materials or access to the help they need to serve their special-needs students. Most special services are designated to meet the needs of the children in grades 1 to 8. Our JK and SK students need these

support services also. They need all the help that is available to ensure that these early years are successful education experiences.

FWTAO is concerned with such inconsistent practices across the province and we look to the Minister of Education (Mr Conway) to provide guidelines about excellent programs for JK and SK, adequate support services for young children with English as a second language and other special needs. We know that many of our immigrant children who come to us begin their schooling in the JK and they need the ESL programs. We understand that the newly formed Ministry of Education early years work team will be addressing these inconsistencies as it develops program policy options over the next five years. It will be important for the ministry to co-ordinate these efforts with the formative years work team so that both programs and support services can be bridged. Therefore, FWTAO recommends that school and system support services be designated to meet the needs of students from JK to grade 8 in elementary schools.

Looking on to recommendation 6, JK and SK teachers and students need the assistance and need to have access to specialists such as primary consultants, special education consultants, speech therapists and guidance personnel. JK and SK is not too young for children to be talking to the guidance people in the schools about personal problems. I have been a guidance teacher; I know.

FWTAO has consistently requested the Ministry of Education to urge school boards to appoint supervisors, co-ordinators, consultants or resource personnel who are specialists in the areas of early childhood and primary education. Both principals and teachers need ready access to such specialists to assist them in the planning and implementation of appropriate programs, to be available when help is needed, to know the children and programs and to be advocates for their special needs when boards are planning for the future. This is vital. I speak from a northern Ontario perspective and we need these people in our small northern boards.

Therefore, FWTAO recommends that the Ministry of Education urge school boards to appoint co-ordinators, consultants or resource personnel who are specialists in the area of early childhood education and primary education.

Full-day kindergarten will mean that more children will be staying at school for lunch. There will be pressure from parents to provide meals for these children, just as they are provided

now in child care facilities. Under the present ministry funding, school boards cannot afford to pay for lunch or for more personnel to supervise these children. On the positive side, though, if schools provide meals, it will give educators the opportunity to teach the children about nutrition, which could have far-reaching effects.

FWTAO is recommending that the provincial government fund lunch programs for day-long kindergarten programs in those school boards that are willing to provide the service. As educators, we are care givers as well as teachers. We have grave concerns about the children we teach. We want the best care for our students at all times, as I am sure you do. This care includes such things as meals, personnel and transportation. The government has announced its intention to implement full-day kindergarten, but it has not announced plans to cover these concerns. FWTAO believes this is shortsighted and will affect the implementation negatively. So our recommendation 7 is there for your information.

Ms Wannamaker: We know that with the opening of the new JK classes and full-day kindergarten classes we are going to need more teachers in these early years. There must be opportunities for practising teachers to gain the additional primary qualifications they will need for these newly created positions. Therefore, we are recommending in our recommendation 8 that the provincial government ensure that opportunities are provided for practising teachers to access additional qualifications in early childhood education and primary. We want this to occur across the province because in many cases, the northern boards included, teachers have to travel great distances to take these kinds of courses.

We have some concerns that with the restructuring of the elementary system these qualification courses will have to change in the year to come, because we no longer have a primary division or a junior division; we now have early years and formative years. We will be looking with interest to see what occurs in this next summer session of courses for teachers because we feel the ministry should be offering some kind of guidance there.

We know also that we will need new teachers to fill these vacancies and we want to attract teachers who like working with young children and have ability in that area. So we have ideas about pre-service and they are included in our brief as well.

We know that we have a teacher shortage right now in 1990. That means there are positions open to new teachers who come from outside the

province and teachers who perhaps are in specialized areas, say, French. Some of these new people do not have the background in early childhood education training that we would need to teach those early years. As well, we have experienced teachers who are returning to the profession. They are coming back and need the up-to-date information about play and activity-based programs. They need the information and research that backs it up.

Therefore, in recommendation 9 we are recommending that the Ministry of Education ensure that school boards provide teachers in the primary division with access to quality in-service programs designed to assist them to be knowledgeable in child development and a play-based pedagogy.

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It is also important to have qualified staff on those primary courses, primary part 1, part 2, and specialist. Our own organization offers many courses for teachers in the form of conferences and ongoing professional development workshops and we have a summer short course that we offer every year as well. One set of the curriculum materials you have seen already; we offer others. In the appendix at the back we also have a list of all the articles that have appeared in our newsletter on curriculum geared to the early years. You might want to glance at that later.

We feel principals in the system are key to effective schools, and supervisory officers as well. We feel that principals need in-service as much as the teachers do. For that reason, we have recommendation 10, whereby the Ministry of Education develop and implement an in-service program in early childhood education for supervisory officers and principals.

The ministry has a five-year plan and it has assured us, especially with the early years work team, that there are going to be program and policy options developed. Administrators, principals and teachers need to know, as they are developed, what they are. We need to know that there is going to be in-service to go along with that. We have to know what any new guidelines that come out are.

When they came out with the science initiatives two years ago, there was a good model for in-servicing those three groups and we would suggest that they continue with it. It is very important that principals and supervisory officers not only have the knowledge, skills and attitudes, but they also have to know how they can implement these kinds of activity-based pro-

grams in their schools and how they can work with their teachers.

We are pleased that many school boards are now appointing principals who have primary qualifications in their backgrounds or who have actually taught in the primary grades. We see this as very hopeful and we will keep encouraging it.

Ms Westcott: I want to speak for the first few moments about the role of the Ministry of Education in child care. First of all, we recommend in recommendation 11, you will note, that the Ministry of Education clearly define its role in child care. The government's move, beginning in the 1988-89 school year, to have child care facilities built into all new schools is already a reality and the child care and education systems are beginning to work co-operatively, but it is unclear who is ultimately responsible for these child care programs which are located in school buildings.

We know that the Ministry of Education provides the building. We know that the Ministry of Community and Social Services provides the startup funds, furnishings and equipment, but what is the role of the Ministry of Education and the school board for the day-to-day operation? What is the responsibility of the principal for these children and these programs?

We know that most of the principals in the schools that have the child care centres do serve on the board of directors of the child care centre, but we question if this provides sufficient clarification of the responsibility of the principal. Why is it that the Ministry of Education's support for child care in a school setting is available only to children who are fortunate enough to live in an area of new development and a new school? What are the ministry's plans to provide similar benefits to other children?

There are also other child care issues. First, the increased numbers of parents whose children will be attending the half-day kindergarten classes will also be looking for half-day child care facilities. Many parents will expect that care to be in the schools since the ministry and the provincial government have already announced initiatives to include child care in schools. There will be community pressure for school boards to provide space for the child care. Most school boards cannot begin to provide such facilities when their schools are already filled to capacity.

Second, the parents whose children will be attending full-day senior kindergarten programs, we predict, will also seek child care for the before-and after-school hours since both parents will most likely be working during those hours.

Again, there will be community pressure on the school boards to provide for child care facilities.

Further, we recommend that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services define their joint and separate roles in the provision of school-based child care. There has been much confusion over who is responsible for what in the daily life of the young child. FWTAO calls for improved collaboration between the two ministries in school-based child care.

The joint Ministry of Education and Ministry of Community and Social Services consultation that took place in the late fall of 1988 has just released its report. In fact, we received our copy last week. The consultation identified areas that we believe are very key areas requiring attention. That consultation identified the following five areas:

1. The need for the clarification of each ministry's mandate, roles and responsibilities;
2. The need for more information and facilitation on how to implement child care;
3. Funding;
4. New and revised policy directions, since it has been found that there is a lack of compatibility of the regulations of the two ministries and these procedures have caused some obstacles to the implementation of the program;
5. The co-ordination of effort.

We certainly see these as areas that need to be addressed.

The confusion over whether the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Community and Social Services is responsible for particular aspects of child care in a school setting is really only one area where clarification is needed. There are many aspects of a young child's life where collaboration among the ministries could serve children in this province better.

FWTAO strongly supported the recommendation of the Ministry of Education early primary education project, which proposed that the Minister of Education negotiate with the other provincial ministers to plan and implement strategies, at both the provincial and regional levels, that will require increased collaboration among their agencies and institutions that serve families with young children.

At that time, the ministries that were named were the ministries of Community and Social Services, Citizenship and Culture, Agriculture and Food, Health, Tourism and Recreation, Municipal Affairs, Housing, Northern Affairs, and the Provincial Secretariat for Social

Development—quite a list of ministries that have an effect on the children in our province.

As well, we agreed with the recommendation from that early primary project for expanded networks and increased co-operation among schools, municipalities, social service and volunteer agencies and other government ministries concerned with families and children, but too frequently responsibility for any co-ordination is yet one more responsibility that is added to the already overburdened schools.

We recommend that the provincial government consider the establishment of a Ministry of Children to co-ordinate children's services. This is not a new recommendation from the federation of women teachers. Such a ministry would have responsibility for the co-ordination of services for children, including education, child care, health, child protection and cultural and recreation services, to name some of the major ones.

If teachers are to provide a learning environment where each child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs are met, there must be co-ordination of school programs with programs that other agencies may be providing for the child. There must be greater access for teachers to additional help for children.

Co-ordination of services would ensure that there is a process in place whereby children who are identified as having special needs may access programs before they enrol in formal schooling, whether it be a recreational program to encourage the development of physical skills or a specific child care program to encourage the development of social skills. Indeed, it may mean bringing the less mature youngster into the school setting earlier to provide the needed stimulation and the enriched environment to improve the child's rate of development.

Teachers in our schools have students who are undernourished and unhealthy, tired, unable to concentrate and falling behind in their programs. Assistance from social services is needed to help these youngsters so their education will not be detrimentally affected. Co-ordination of the assistance is essential.

Reinstatement of health care professionals in the schools could produce early identification of medical problems and an emphasis on the prevention of illness, which would benefit all our children.

We have urged for some time additional personnel in the schools to meet the needs of refugee and immigrant children. This should not be the responsibility solely of the Ministry of Education, but co-ordination of services at the

provincial level is essential if access to services will be possible at the local level.

The Better Beginnings, Better Futures project, which was announced in November, sounds very promising to us. We will be monitoring these projects with enthusiasm, but we urge you to consider the needs of children and to recommend greater co-ordination of programs. We believe a ministry for children is a way to provide this.

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Ms Penfold: We have said in this room before, and in other rooms here, that money spent on early childhood education is a good investment. I know that you have heard some research that shows that for every dollar spent on quality early education of children, we can save probably as much as seven dollars in the future in other kinds of social costs.

We are really encouraged by the \$3,000 grant that has been announced for the startups, but we are also encouraging you to think about the need for the same kind of startup with full-day kindergartens as well. At present you might have, in one classroom, two kindergarten classes, each coming for half a day. If you are going to extend that to a full day, then you are going to need another classroom for that full-day kindergarten and so the same kind of grant is going to be necessary for that group.

We know there is probably going to be a lot of pressure on school boards to spend much more beyond the current ceiling levels, on things such as smaller classes, planning time, more human resources and in-service programs that are going to be a cost to local school boards, and we are going to have to raise those grant ceilings.

We believe it is time that the primary children who constitute one third of Ontario's 1.8 million students receive their fair share. We welcome your questions.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you to the FWTAO for a very good presentation, a reaffirmation of some of the things we have been hearing through the course of the hearings, and they have come from your own specific expertise in the field and emphasis. I want to ask you what may or may not be an easy question to answer—I do not know—and that has to do with the class size recommendations.

We have been hearing a number of variables at this point in terms of class size. You are the first to differentiate between junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten with us, and we have heard a rationale for 15 from some American studies in terms of the efficiency of education and different sizes of groups, and a cutoff of 20 has been used

by many groups in terms of no more than that. I was looking through some of your other material but I cannot see what the specific basis was for the 15-18 proposal. I would be very interested in hearing that.

Ms Penfold: In an ideal world, and if we had unlimited funds, it would be wonderful to have a ratio of eight to one as they do for day care facilities and child care facilities. That would be wonderful. But what we feel we are coming to you with are some realistic expectations. We understand that as children progress and develop they become more independent. As they proceed, for example, from child care into more formal schooling they are going through the years where they have toilet training and so on—they do not need that. What we are focusing on in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten is moving into more formal schooling. As they proceed through the stages of development, they require less individual attention.

Also, another factor: As we move into the junior and senior kindergarten years, it is important that they have a group size that allows for their social and emotional development as well, and so the activities that they are involved in in play often involve social interaction with other children in the games that they play. That is why we have come up with the recommendation we have.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That does not give me the specifics of why 15 rather than 16 or 14, which I think we are put up against in terms of the committee. I am sure we are going to be saying something about this. We have now heard a number of suggestions on the developmental theory basis. There has been a paucity of precision as to what number is appropriate, but I respect the need to be practical politically about these things, even as a socialist.

Within your notion of the class sizes that are involved, you do not make mention of teacher aides. We have heard from boards about two approaches they are taking where they have present total control over class size, some of them going to 20 to one without an aide and some of them going to 20 to one with an aide, as an example. You make no mention of the aide situation here, and I wondered if that comes out of your—

Ms Penfold: We would love to address it, though, because we do have some feelings about that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Good. I thought you must have.

Ms Westcott: Perhaps I can start with a comment. Certainly we have had discussion about the role of the teacher and the role of the teacher aide or the teacher assistant or the educational assistant—they go by different titles. We believe that there are clear roles for both of those people in the classroom but we do not see that the teacher aide replaces the teacher. We believe that they have separate roles. We are concerned that in most of the situations where we are talking about teacher aides in class size discussions, then the intent is that the teacher aide will assume the role of the teacher.

We believe there are many ways in which the teacher aides and teacher assistants can facilitate the learning of students and facilitate the program and assist the teacher with the program. But we believe the teacher-pupil ratio must be sufficiently small that the kinds of programs that need to be developed for the child can be developed. So we really would like to talk about teacher assistants aside from the issue of class size. Their role is to assist with the programming for individual students and assist the teacher rather than to take over the teacher's role.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is a helpful distinction.

I want to ask you a question about the pre-entry assessment of children, just maybe anecdotally or in general in terms of your policies. We have been hearing a pretty broad range of practice out there in terms of whether there are in-home interviews done or whether it is a 10-minute interview in some schools in a meeting with the parent and child. What is the FWTAO's position on that whole notion of the linkages with other groups, day care for instance, pre-entry, etc?

Ms Penfold: We think that the whole entry process is very important. Ms Owens, would you like to address that one a little bit more.

Ms Owens: Yes, we do believe it is extremely important because it allows us an opportunity to speak to the primary child care givers, the parents, and to interact, as you say, with the day cares or any other special groups that have worked with the children. But we also feel very strongly that time needs to be given to follow through with this in an appropriate way, to allow the teachers to interview the parents, interview the other people within an appropriate time, not in the summertime or after hours.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Do you have models that you advocate? Somebody was talking to us—I cannot remember who now; my mind does not hold on to these things that well. About a year before entry a process would start, various kinds

of meetings and that sort of thing, but again we hear of some boards where there is a 10-minute meeting, maybe during the summer, a month before a child comes into the system, which obviously does not give you much of a chance to do much. Do you have models that you advocate?

Ms Owens: I am familiar with two models, one where teachers were given time prior to the new school year to work with the parents during the day and also to visit other agencies and other groups. That is where your resource and consulting people can come into play as well. The other model is to allow the children to come in through a staggered entry process at the beginning of the year and the rest of the time is used to meet with and interview the parents.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That leads into another question, but there were more comments.

Ms Wilson: Some of the boards that I am familiar with in northern Ontario have many of the things that Ms Owens has talked about. But they also, certainly when they do the first admission early in the spring, while the parent is possibly talking to the principal, doing the registration, the child will be involved with the class and get to experiment with some of the toys and some of the activities with some of the children who are now the big kids in the class, because they have been in the class for the year, so the child becomes very familiar and comfortable. That is the start of it. And again the child has time with the teacher. So there are various aspects.

I think all teachers who are involved in the entry procedure of children are very conscious of the need for children to be comfortable in the surroundings that they are in and to feel at home so that the education experience is a very positive one. In the primary years certainly, that is what we are looking for.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: Exactly. The question of staggered starts also raises a question of a variety of entry dates. I wondered if you had anything more to add to that. It is not in your specific recommendations. Do you advocate more flexibility in terms of when children can enter in terms of their own development rather than their specific birth date? I guess I should be more precise, sorry.

Ms Westcott: We know that there are really two ways of looking at staggered entry. Some people talk about staggered entry when they are talking about September, where some students

will start the first week and some a few days later. Other people talk about a staggered entry when they are talking about different times during the school year.

We really approach it from the point of view that we must look at the individual child and the child's needs, so we do not believe that it is easy to say that there is a better way than the possibility there now of children starting in September and perhaps having some flexibility in September. But we are looking at what is best for the child. That is what we are looking at as far as entry programs.

Mr R. F. Johnston: A final thing—I know there are others who want to get in—has to do with teacher training. I am really pleased that there is this great emphasis on extra courses being taken by your members, as there is, because of my great concern about the way the faculties have organized their training and the fact that a person can easily come out of a primary division concentration at a faculty and have had no practicum experience in a junior or senior kindergarten and actually go into a placement in that kind of situation never having had a chance to even watch the developmental theory be put into practice.

I gather from things that you are saying and your remarks that you see the need for some reorganization at the faculty level in the organization of the specialties, if I can put it that way.

Ms Penfold: Yes, and that is going to have to be dovetailed with what is going on in restructuring as well so that we have the additional qualifications courses matching the way we have the system set up in the schools. So that is going to be an ongoing thing that we need to look at in the next little while. There is going to have to be close liaison between the teacher education people and the people who are actually working on the processes and the curriculum.

Ms Wannamaker: They may also have to offer more additional qualification kinds of courses across the province, because just as an example, I was teaching a primary part 2 course last year and I had 63 teachers in that course. Over half of them were teachers returning to the profession, and all of the new play-based and whole language approach was very new to them. So there is a need for those kinds of courses.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am also becoming interested and I do not know if you have got a position on the notion of teacher education centres and the American model that has developed recently, which would be put primarily under the control of teachers in terms of the

service base and having them. New York state has a network of them set up across the state, for instance.

It seems to me that if we want to have systematic upgrading of people and in-service training, some kind of network like that, rather than the kind of reliance we have now specifically around professional development days, etc., might be a very useful network of support through the PD days and other things for the system.

Has FWTAO taken a position on the evolution of in-service training in terms of these kinds of teacher education centres? I know the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has done some papers on it recently and they are quite positive.

Ms Westcott: Certainly we have had discussion about teacher education centres in the ongoing dialogue we have had as teacher education is under review in the province, and there are a number of models of professional development, if you will, that we are promoting. We believe that school boards and the Ministry of Education need to be involved in this as well, that it is not just the responsibility of the teachers and the teachers' federations.

We have been developing with school boards over the past few years some, what we would call, co-operative models for professional development where we have had ongoing PD over one year with the school board and our federation sharing the responsibility and the cost of that professional development, so that school boards can provide that. I think that sometimes the teacher centre model can include that kind of program.

But we really see one downside of the teacher centre program, and that is that the responsibility then is seen to be as the teacher's totally. We believe that if the Ministry of Education is going to be promoting change in curriculum, both the Ministry of Education and school boards have a responsibility to support teacher professional development.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I agree.

Ms Poole: I would like to thank the FWTAO for presenting to us today. As usual, you have given us a very high standard of work and some very thought-provoking and very concrete recommendations. Because I am not terribly logical, let's start at the end of your recommendations, number 13, where you would like the provincial government to consider the establishment of a Ministry for Children to co-ordinate children's services.

I keep coming back to this because we have had at least four or five presenters throw out this idea and I find it very appealing, but I also find it very hard to get a concrete grasp on how it would work. From how you have phrased this, I would assume that when you say "to co-ordinate children's services," you are talking about a ministry that would be an advocacy ministry, a co-ordination ministry, but not necessarily the ministry that would deliver the services.

Ms Penfold: That is one way. I will start off by saying that—I am going to ask others to join in. There are different models that we could look at and what we are asking for is the opportunity to have some dialogue about how this could work. We see some real benefits and we know that it is absolutely essential that we are going to have to have some co-operation between the ministries. Today, it is just not divided up into those nice, neat segments in the schools and we have to have some more co-operation.

Ms Westcott: I think you have made the point that we certainly have been discussing. We have not promoted a particular model because we think there are some options to consider. We just think there is a real need for co-ordination and from our perspective we can see certain ways of that co-ordination being improved, whether it is a ministry that has responsibility for overseeing some of the other ministries or a ministry that has responsibility for working with other ministries. That has to be discussed, and we certainly would like to be involved in that discussion.

We have seen some projects where the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health have been able to co-operate, but we have also seen too many incidents where things have fallen apart because there was no co-operation. So we really urge that there be some discussion about this and we would like to be involved in it.

Ms Owens: Joan mentioned a project that is under way right now, and the other project that I am familiar with is Better Beginnings, Better Futures, so I do not think we should be starting from a zero point. There has been discussion and dialogue among the various ministries. Obviously, there is a belief that there is a need, and I think it is a matter of building on what already has been started.

Ms Poole: I see two specific models we could look to. One is an advocacy ministry such as we have right now with seniors or the disabled where the ministry is not responsible for delivering most of the programs. However, they do

co-ordinate with other ministries to deliver programs and also go to bat when other ministries are dealing with their specific issues.

The other model, obviously, is one Ministry for Children which would really take care of the delivery aspect from both the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education. I just see a logistical barrier there, for instance, education. If you had education services delivered under Ministry of the Child, where would you cut off? Are you going to put secondary school education under Ministry of the Child? I know my 14-year-old would probably have Ministry of the Juvenile, but I just see a number of barriers, and the first alternative would seem to be a more realistic way to go about it. So thank you for that.

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The second question I had concerns your recommendation 6 where you recommended that the Ministry of Education urge school boards to appoint co-ordinators, consultants or resource personnel who are specialists in the area of early childhood education. This morning we heard that the Toronto Board of Education has adopted this model. They have one ECE consultant plus four advisers. Are you aware of how widespread this is across the province? I am assuming this is an exception rather than the rule and most boards do not have this kind of—

Ms Penfold: It really varies. It varies considerably all over the province. There are some boards in the province that have hardly any consultants or co-ordinators whatsoever, never mind one specifically for this area, but we feel it is a real need. Right now, it is very varied.

Ms Poole: The last point was basically on recommendations 8 and 9 where you are talking about teacher in-service and teacher training and that type of thing. I do not gather from the way your recommendation is worded that you see this in a mandatory light, that it be mandatory for teachers to upgrade and to take further primary qualifications.

You feel that the ministry should urge school boards to have them accessible but not to go to the stage where the ministry should say that teachers do have to upgrade on a regular basis and keep on top of what is happening in their area, because it might be 20 years since they took their degree at the faculty of education and things have changed.

Ms Penfold: I think it is really difficult if you are going to try to mandate that that must occur, because there are a lot of circumstances that

happen that can be a variable on that, but we definitely encourage it. We want the courses offered so that people are able to take them.

There are many women in some parts of the province who find it extremely difficult to access the courses that we have now because there are not that many of them being offered. If we make it so that people are able to access them, if we encourage them to access them, we believe they are going to. Past statistics show us the number of our members who really do.

Ms Poole: So you do not see that if it was mandatory, there would be an onus on government to ensure that those courses were provided in isolated northern boards, for instance.

Ms Penfold: We feel there is that onus on the government right now to provide the courses.

Ms Poole: So maybe there should be an onus on the teachers to attend them.

Ms Westcott: Could I just pick up on that? I think what we have to recognize is that there is more access to ongoing teacher in-service or teacher professional development than the particular additional qualifications courses.

Some of our teachers who work for boards where there are consultants on staff will have regular in-service during the school year and they may have in-service in, say, a specific area of early childhood. So they would choose to extend their skill by taking a different program during the summer or during the winter that is an additional qualification course, because they have had a program offered from their school board.

I think we have to be very careful in saying, "Everybody should take this course." For some it would not be very useful because they would have already accessed much of the same opportunity through a different process. So we urge people to really be cautious about that.

As Helen has said, statistics show that the majority of teachers are really involved in ongoing professional development. Each year at our annual meeting we provide statistics about our membership and it is always amazing. Every year I am surprised by it. I should not be by now, but there is a tremendous increase in the qualifications of our members each year and we look at how that has improved since the year before. Then we look at statistics from the Ministry of Education about the number of teachers who have been taking the additional qualifications courses.

There is no question that teachers are continually upgrading. Besides these that are the recognized courses, as I mentioned, there is all

the additional in-service that they have had, whether it is a two- or three-workshop program or whether it is evening workshops now and again.

I just have to remind us all too that whenever we are talking about extending our own skill and our own qualifications, when you have identified yourself the area that you believe you should be increasing in your skill, then you are going to be much more successful in that study than if someone says, "You shall take this course." Your whole attitude and your whole opportunity for learning is going to be quite different. We think it is much more positive this way.

The Chair: I think the commitment in a number of parts of the province—you have not lived until you are driving in January to guidance part 1 in North Bay from Sudbury. You have not lived at all about compulsory or other courses.

Ms Wilson: It is even worse when you are the teacher and you are going to be late because the road is closed.

The Chair: That is right, and all your students are waiting for you.

Ms Wilson: That is right.

The Chair: Waiting to upgrade.

Ms Poole: We could make it mandatory in summer then.

The Chair: Oh no, we do not want to be treated differently in the north, just equally.

Mrs O'Neill: Just to continue that, I happened to be in Smiths Falls on Monday night and I was talking to a teacher there who is very involved in peer teaching. You likely know the official title of this. She was becoming one of the trainers of her teachers and felt fairly excited about this. She was going in quite regularly to Ottawa to learn how to be the teacher to her teachers. I found that was exciting, and she was excited about it. That was in special education.

This is an excellent document. I have not seen this before. I would say that this is going to be very helpful to us.

I also just want to comment that I am very happy that you have tackled coping with sudden death in your current publication. I think it is something that school boards have to deal with, and certainly school settings have to, and I am very glad that you have attempted to bring some kind of thought to that.

I am always impressed with the way you involve parents, and I guess I am a little disappointed today that you did not say much about parent education in early childhood education. We have talked about this with other groups

as late as this morning, and I am sure that you have insights into that. I would like you to have the opportunity now to say a little bit about how important you feel parent education is at this particular time of the child's life and if you have any experiences you think would be helpful to us as we make considerations and recommendations in that area.

Ms Westcott: I am pleased that you have raised that issue. I guess one of the concerns we have had about preparing for today's session is that, in light of all that we have about early childhood education, we just cannot possibly bring it all to you today. We have been very involved, I guess is the best word, in preparation of materials to assist our teachers in helping to talk with parents about early childhood education and, particularly, active learning.

Our play document, our active learning document, was one of the first. Just about to go to print now is what we are calling our PAL kit. It is called Promoting Active Learning, and this kit will have sections to it that will assist teachers in meeting with parents and helping them to help parents understand the kinds of programs that their students are involved in in the classrooms.

We are very concerned about that outreach. We are very concerned about helping parents be aware. We are really encouraging teachers to have parents come into the classroom and observe. I think you are aware of the primary campaign that we had a few years ago where parents were really wanting to talk about the kind of education their children are involved in. They came out in strong support for the meetings we have had across the province. So we are very involved with parents and quite supportive in continuing that communication.

Ms Penfold: We have also initiated our "good schools" project this year, which will be an ongoing two-year project where we hope to hold public forums throughout the province, as well as a number of other activities, to involve parents in helping us reach the vision about a good school so that we can have some sort of yardstick against which to measure some of the changes that are taking place. We are really quite excited about that particular project that is going on, and it is really a follow-up to the primary campaign. Also, if it would be beneficial to the committee, when the PAL kits are ready, we could send some copies over to you.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you very much. It is an area I certainly think we are going to make some recommendations in. I know that when I was parliamentary assistant, you came in with what I

thought was a giant leap into the primary initiative of lowering class size. I thought you were the pioneers in real thought patterns in the beginning of that and I think you have continued to take your leadership there.

I am interested in the primary guidance you said you have done. Would you be able to say a little bit more about that? That is another area we have not heard much about.

1520

Ms Wilson: I would be pleased to. As a guidance teacher in a fairly large school in my area, I had an opportunity to go into all the classrooms. I had times that I taught specifically with grades 7 and 8, but I also had times when I could go and visit the JKs, the Ks and the grades 1, 2 and 3 and talk to them about social skills, about things that were bothering them, about things that were happening in the community, about how they were getting along with each other and maybe why there was a problem.

My office happened to be right beside the nurse's office, and of course whenever any of the children came to see me they wanted to make sure, number one, that I was not giving them a needle, so I reassured them of that, but there was an opportunity to talk to the children and to help them through some difficult situations. Even with the little ones, they need to be able to know that there is someone they can talk to in confidence and get things off their chests.

I found I was really quite amazed at how many of the little people I did spend time with, because when I first went into that role that was not my perception. After being in the role for a year, I found that I was spending more than half of my time with the primary children and being available to them so that they knew who I was, the position I had and that if they wanted to talk to me about anything at all, they could come and talk to me. If they were mad at a teacher, they could come and tell me why they were annoyed, what had happened, and we could go on from there.

Mrs O'Neill: How did they get permission to come to see you? Was that well known, what you were just saying?

Ms Wilson: It was well known within the school. Certainly I did workshops with the teachers in the school and said: "This is my role. I am available for the children. If any of the children want to speak to me at any time at all, please allow them to leave the room, or I am here at recess." Certainly the principal was very supportive, as was the administration.

Mrs O'Neill: You are a guidance specialist, are you?

Ms Wilson: Yes, I am.

Mrs O'Neill: We dealt with this very early on. I guess it is sudden death, because it is certainly disheartening to know there are some children in that age group who are very depressed. We know some of the reasons for that, and some of them even contemplate taking their own lives. Really, I do feel there is a need for some accessing of a support like yours.

Ms Penfold: Our organization has a really strong position on that. We do believe there should be qualified guidance counsellors in all the elementary schools. The emotional and social setting that children are in now, as I mentioned earlier, is vastly different than it was many years ago. We know that children are dealing with child abuse, with substance abuse; we know that many of them are experiencing very severe problems. We believe that a guidance counsellor will be able to co-ordinate the services in the school, to make referrals and to be of help to the students. A number of them too are initiating what they call tragic response teams to deal with children who have experienced sudden death or other kinds of tragedies.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you have any statistics on how many elementary schools in the province do have guidance support?

Ms Penfold: No, I do not, but it is low.

Mrs O'Neill: Very low, is it?

Ms Penfold: It is a real need.

Mr R. F. Johnston: On that statistic, and who was delivering it, the interesting thing was that the people who were trained to deliver it were often the ones not delivering it. Most of them were back in the classroom, and others without the expertise were—

Mrs O'Neill: I know some boards have a course, and it is mandatory in grades 7 and 8 now, so that has brought it into the elementary schools, maybe in your case too.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Or earlier.

Mrs O'Neill: In some cases, of course, those students are not in the elementary schools.

Ms Wilson: It is mandated in grades 7 and 8, as you said, but not many schools have someone who is available to go into a classroom as a resource person and who has the time to do that and to work not only with the children but with the parents. I had many times when I spent time with parents also, to help them with their children and with problems that had arisen.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The regulatory mandate is what, 20 hours for grades 7 and 8?

Ms Wilson: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That does not really allow much scope even at that level for the kind of work you are talking about.

Ms Penfold: The main thing you can accomplish in those guidance periods in grades 7 and 8 is preparation for secondary school, option-choosing and all of that sort of thing, the main focus under OSIS.

Mr Neumann: I was interested in your presentation. Many aspects of it are very much on the topic that we are dealing with here as a committee, to try to grapple with the changes in education and to ensure that we meet the needs of society.

I have forgotten which group made a proposal for a special Ministry of Children's Services. Like Richard, I sometimes do not remember which group said what. I have forgotten which group had reached the conclusion that this was not the solution, that there would be perhaps the creation of a bureaucracy that would be adding to rather than replacing other bureaucracies, that perhaps there were other ways that services could be co-ordinated.

In some communities, children's services committees have been established. Have you had any contact with those? Do you think they have been effective at all? Could they be built upon as a model?

Ms Penfold: Yes, I have had some experience with that, actually, and sometimes that can be very efficient and useful on a local level, but it is not happening all over the place and we know that. I mentioned earlier, when I said things are not compartmentalized in school, whether a child has had enough to eat is going to affect that child's education and whether a child has the adequate health care is going to affect the child's education. A lot of that is directly related to poverty.

If we are really interested in providing a quality experience for children in the early years, we believe there is no other alternative than to have that kind of co-ordination going on. In our opinion, a ministry is a good way of having that happen. If we could be guaranteed that it happens a different way through some sort of co-ordination group other than the ministry, fine. But what we are saying is that it has to happen.

Mr Neumann: I agree with you on the objectives, and some of the questions I have asked are related to the lack of communication

that exists in terms of tracing the progress of the child before school entry and ensuring that information that is gathered is not lost along the way and that there are advocates for children, but I guess, coming out of community involvement, my bias is more towards establishing effective co-ordination at the local level, rather than creating a new ministry here at Queen's Park.

Ms Penfold: One problem with that, though, is that in a lot of local communities those organizations do not exist. A person might have to travel a long way before there is a family service association, for example, or even a children's aid society.

Mr Neumann: We are talking here about creating models, though.

Ms Penfold: Yes.

Mr Neumann: Given the fact that we have two other presentations, I think I will hold off my other questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

I just have one short one. You did address the question of the ministry of children, and I noticed by your statistics that 44 of your membership hold ECE in some form and 2,850 are primary. I am wondering if you do address at some other level the jurisdictional situation between your qualifications under primary, which includes kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 and so on, and ECE, which covers basically the day care or early childhood education aspect. I note that you did not address it in your recommendations. I guess it is more of a comment than anything else, but it is difficult sometimes—well, I understand, of course, who you represent—if you are recommending so much on one side and not the kinds of linkages that one might expect you might have addressed. It may be in your brief, but I did not see it in your recommendations.

1530

Ms Penfold: If you would look on page 33, we address some of the topic there, and yes, we do believe that it should be qualified teachers who are teaching junior kindergarten and kindergarten, but we also recognize the fact that in some of the early childhood education courses, those people are receiving a very good education in teaching early childhood education, and we are interested in looking at the process of getting those people to be qualified teachers.

The Chair: Good, because Postman is still Postman and Piaget is still Piaget. Thank you very much for a very important part of our deliberation; your contribution is well respected. It was very comprehensive.

I had indicated that our next presenters would be delayed for a moment because of some other work, but because of their time constraints, and we have been a little late in having them start and they do have other commitments, we could move to the next one. Then we will deal with Bob's first draft and discuss that for a few moments before the last presenters. If the next presenters could come forward please, we will deal with this next delegation and then deal with Bob's first draft. It will be only explanatory in this case anyway. It will not be more than that.

Good afternoon, I welcome you to the committee, the Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association, Barbara Lynn and Thomas Reilly. Again, our apologies for being a little later, but we were late starting and we have been running late all day. I realize that you do have an appointment, so we appreciate your patience. Thank you. Please proceed.

ONTARIO CATHOLIC SUPERVISORY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Miss Lynn: Thank you for the opportunity of once again addressing this select committee on this very important topic of early childhood education programs in the context of lifelong learning. In the interests of your time, Mr Reilly and myself will try to highlight some of the points we have made in the brief and come as quickly as possible to our five recommendations at the end of the brief in order to allow sufficient time for some dialogue with you.

If I might make some comparisons, I would suggest to you that the paper we have addressed to you takes a very broad conception of early childhood education. In fact, we conceive of early childhood education as encompassing all of the experiences that we provide within our society, including informal settings for children from ages zero to six years, and we would intend in the paper and in our conversation with you to discuss what we believe these experiences are, why there is a need for them, their effectiveness, the inconsistencies and gaps which appear to exist in provision of services and to make some recommendations around program co-ordination and governance.

There is a perceived need, a growing need, for additional programs and services in early childhood education. The range of services which OCSOA considers within early childhood education include junior and senior kindergarten before and after school, and lunchtime programs, meal programs, child care in-school facilities and private and public day care programs.

There exist fundamental philosophical differences in society about the desirability of maintaining this range of services, but I would contend that most of our members tend to be more the pragmatists who point to the economic necessity of such programs and argue that, since they exist, they should be provided in the most effective way possible.

Research on early childhood education provides very mixed views as well on program effects. Data provided from research have allowed such divergent conclusions as: Early childhood education makes no difference to later functioning; early childhood education leads to initial gains in development which become indistinguishable in a few years; and early childhood education provides lasting gains, particularly to children at risk. There is a great diversity of opinion and factual data from research around the value of early childhood programs. However, there are a number of issues that we would like to address.

Mr Reilly: To bring the matter to the factual situation as we see it in Ontario, OCSOA is concerned about the quality and range of program offerings, the fairness of the distribution of what is offered and the efficiency with which the services are provided. Senior and junior kindergarten are established programs in our schools and are child centred, developmental in nature and play-oriented. Naturally, being in education, we approve highly of them and think highly of them. However, recent announcements by the government to make those universally available on a half-day basis and, where space permits, full day for kindergarten, we do welcome. We think they should be universally available.

The only caveat we have is that making the full-day kindergarten contingent upon space being available really does place a burden on certain parts of the province where space just is not available in the school. I think that is a difficulty that will have to be struggled with.

We also are concerned that moving to these programs at this time could exacerbate the current shortage of teachers. I think that has to be looked at very closely to make sure we have sufficient teachers. As far as we know, there is no study proceeding which would indicate the best training for teachers at the JK and SK levels. And we have concerns around the topic, which came up a few minutes ago, making an Ontario teacher's certificate available to graduates of early childhood education. We think that is something that should be possible and we would

like to see ways and means of making it possible because those are very valuable trained people who are available.

Before- and after-school and lunchtime programs: It is a fact of life that many children arrive early and stay late and are there for the whole of lunchtime. They are looked after by school staff in various ways. However, in many places in the province special programs are provided, usually on a private basis by nonprofit organizations using the schools and providing programs for students where the care and provision for students is a bit better than the school staff can provide. Very often we end up with a situation where two standards of care exist for students in the same school. The difference is based on the willingness or the ability of the parents to pay a fee. We question that particular situation in a publicly funded school system.

In terms of meal programs, something I am sure you have heard about, many students do arrive at school hungry. Some boards have put in, commendably, programs to look after that. Not all boards do or can—and we do not know which is which in every case—offer those programs. Again, there is an anomaly that we think has to be very closely looked at.

Child care in school facilities: Again, in an enlightened move, a couple of years ago—when a new school is being built, a child care facility is built on to it. Here you see the kind of lack of co-ordination in a microcosm. We have in the board we are with a number of these situations and there is absolutely no doubt that in the eyes of the clientele, the board is running the program. The principal gets the calls about accommodation, transportation and authority. Staffing ratios in the same building vary widely. The salary paid to people doing what you say would be hard to distinguish as the same job vary widely, and there are philosophical differences around program. There, in a nutshell, you see the lack of co-ordination across the province.

Private and public day care responds to the crying need for more and more day care. In spite of the best efforts of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, quality varies greatly from setting to setting. The co-ordination with the school system also varies greatly, and it would be almost impossible, in our opinion, to co-ordinate, given the amateur status of some private day care.

1540

Miss Lynn: This overview, I believe, would point out that we have a situation in which the provision of programs and services is often

haphazard, varying in quality, basically inequitable and unco-ordinated.

We believe that the early years are of very great importance, for a variety of reasons. The attitudes brought to learning will be established in these years. An emotionally secure, successful experience will establish a willingness to learn and a positive approach to new tasks. The intellectual, physical and emotional experience for most other life tasks is being established at this stage. The opportunities for uncovering difficulties and compensating for them before they create feelings of failure and frustration are never greater than at this stage. At this time, it is possible to establish wholesome patterns of behaviour.

For these reasons, it is important that early childhood education be established in a coherent, properly funded manner and conducted according to the best professional knowledge and practice available. Because of this study and the inferences we have suggested, we make the following five recommendations.

In the area of management, we recommend that all the services described be placed under the governance and management of one ministry, or that a new Ministry of the Child be created to bring coherence to this whole field.

In the area of funding, we recommend that, under one ministry, funding mechanisms be established which would rely less on local resources and more on provincial resources or that fewer options be left to local authorities regarding whether or not such programs will exist.

With regard to program, we would recommend that mechanisms be put in place, which would include research, program development and monitoring, that would provide greater consistency and a progressive experience for the children involved. This recommendation and those that follow would be easier to implement if the first two recommendations were put in place.

With regard to co-ordination, OCSOA recommends that a record system similar to the Ontario student record system be begun for all children as soon as they enter any early childhood education setting.

With regard to logistics, we recommend that a study be conducted of the regulations and requirements for the setting in which early childhood education takes place, with a view to implementing the best practice on a consistent basis.

OCSOA welcomes recent government initiatives and the current series of hearings by the

select committee since it has given priority and focus to the importance of early childhood education. The importance for children of a healthy beginning to social interaction and schooling has not always been recognized. The system we now have has therefore developed in a somewhat haphazard manner, with many agencies involved. The key submission from us is that the time for rationalization has come.

The establishment of one central authority is advocated so that equity, consistency and quality can be provided. Such authority could be given to an already existing ministry such as the Ministry of Education or to a new ministry dedicated to this very important social policy field. In either case, we would expect that such a change would be accompanied by the consolidation of funds already available and quickly followed by the infusion of new funds dedicated to the equalization of local variances in wealth.

OCSOA thanks the members of the select committee for their attention and we are now open to any questions that you may have of us.

The Vice-Chair: Any questions from the select committee at all? Seeing none, I would like to thank OCSOA for its presentation this afternoon. I guess you have been as comprehensive as we have to be. Again, I would just like to—oh, you have one?

Ms Poole: Yes. I did not know it was going to move this quickly.

I would like to question you about a Ministry of the Child or a Ministry of Children, which you, as well as other questioners, have again brought up. You seem to imply that as long as the co-ordination problem is resolved, you do not have a preference as to whether it is an advocacy ministry or whether actually one ministry—for instance, the Ministry of Education—is given the mandate for all child care services. Is that a correct inference? Have you done any background work on this or have your members indicated that they have a model or a vision of how they would like this to occur?

Mr Reilly: I think there would be a slight preference for a ministry with some clout rather than an advocacy ministry. Whoever it is promoting it, to get more than one ministry together to agree on something is, to say the least, difficult. You probably know that even better than we know it. I think we would prefer that, whatever ministry it is, it would actually be able to effect things, to get things done. Failing that, a strong advocacy ministry may well be successful in forcing people together, but it makes it more difficult.

To create an entirely new ministry for this, we would agree with the comments that have been made about yet another bureaucracy. I do not want to grab everything for education, but it would be good if it could come under something that is already there and then you would only get some extra bureaucracy.

Ms Poole: Thank you for those comments.

Miss Lynn: We do see a crying need for some ministry or organization to set some minimum standards so that the services that are available are available equitably to both youngsters and their parents across this province.

Ms Poole: Yes, that certainly is a concern. In fact, officials from the Ministry of Community and Social Services was before us yesterday and I believe, from their comments, that they are undertaking this kind of review of co-ordinating the services because they realize as well as we do that with a number of different ministries being responsible, it is creating an imbalance, particularly when you have one under the Day Nurseries Act and another one under the Education Act and the rules and regulations are not really all that similar.

Just one other question. I think I made a note about it here somewhere, if you will bear with me for a moment. You brought up the problems of the divergence in the faculty of education degrees as opposed to ECE. I think you are suggesting that there be a reconciliation. Do you have any specific ideas on that as to how this could be achieved? Do you see a community college diploma in ECE, for instance, that they should be given credit for in a university program? Is that what you are thinking of?

Mr Reilly: From what I know of those programs, and my knowledge is not extensive, it would seem to me not impossible to do that. We make equivalencies for almost everything else. The people we hire, say, as teacher assistants bring a great deal of skill and knowledge to that position. I do not see why we would not get a good, healthy equivalency which would make it that much easier for them to take the next step.

Ms Poole: Logic would dictate that there should not be any reason why not. It just seems, to date, it has not.

Mr Reilly: That is very true.

Ms Poole: Exactly. Territorial imperative. So your association would support this kind of reconciliation then in equivalency?

Mr Reilly: I would think so.

Mrs O'Neill: I just wanted to pick up on the previous statement that Ms Poole made. I really

do feel that we should be encouraged by the efforts that have been made by the two ministries of this government, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education, because as I understand it, across this country it is a rather unique experience to have two ministries working consistently day by day in developing guidelines.

That has not been easy and it has taken three years of effort and a lot of very good civil servants' efforts. I feel we should just say, "Please continue to work hard." I do feel it is healthy to bring those two ministries together in the service of children and I know some good things are happening.

Mr Reilly: They are, that is true. The only place we see confusion is with the parents. A parent does not understand. A parent phones up the principal and says, "How come my child was in day care last year and there was one adult for eight pupils, and this year it's JK and there's one adult for 20 pupils?"

Mrs O'Neill: I get the same letters in my office. I have to do the best I can.

1550

Miss Lynn: The principals do get left trying to answer a lot of questions from the public around the child care program within the school, questions about funding, hours and so on. They do make every attempt to be informed, but it really is not a program over which they have any governance or authority.

Mrs O'Neill: I know principals put a lot of hours in on those programs. We have heard from some of those principals.

Miss Lynn: I am sure you have.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We very much appreciate your being with us today and I hope you still make your appointment.

Mr Reilly: Yes, we will.

Miss Lynn: Thank you.

The Chair: Before we see the next deputant, Bob will hand out his homework assignment and make a few comments about it. It will not be long and extensive. I very much appreciate your patience, but we are running a bit late. If we could do that now, while we have as many as we are going to have. You have handed it out already?

Mr Gardner: Thank you, Mr Chair. Yes, Tannis has handed it out. As members know, we will have some initial discussion to give me instructions on drafting the report tomorrow afternoon. The framework that I have handed out

is simply a compilation of the kinds of issues and questions that have been arising through the hearings. It is solely meant as a guide to tomorrow's discussion. It is not in any sense an attempt to prejudge what members will want to do in their report. We also should remember that we have not finished the hearings, that we have witnesses today and tomorrow and a lot still to come from the ministry. Having said that, members can use those questions to get some handle on what they want to talk about tomorrow and what other questions they want to bring up and so on.

The Chair: Thanks, Bob. I might indicate that we had a telephone conference a week ago Monday on the kinds of directions and time frames we were looking at. What we felt was, given the discussion that was going on, that I would ask the House leaders for concurrence to meet during the time, as we did in the fall, for the third report and allow us some time. We are giving this to Bob for about a month. When we come back to the regular House business, we will then look at the first real draft based the direction we receive tomorrow. That was the game plan that the steering committee agreed on for presentation to the committee. We are still, of course, mindful of the full committee's input into that and I would ask you to think about it overnight so that we can give Bob and the steering committee some direction on where you would like to go and the kinds of things you would like to see in the report.

Mrs O'Neill: Do you want immediate reaction?

The Chair: No, I would like it tomorrow, if we can. Again, we are holding up witnesses. We are meeting at four o'clock in an in-camera session to go over this, and if you can think of it, make some notes for tomorrow.

Mrs O'Neill: That is when you are going to do it, tomorrow at four?

The Chair: Yes, that was the time set aside on the agenda.

Interjection.

The Chair: Yes, actually four. I asked you to really do it at this point, so you can have some time to think about it and give us some of your expert advice and counselling. Any questions as far as that goes?

We have before us Fiona Nelson, private citizen. I appreciate your coming before us in your capacity and with your experience, and I will turn it over to you.

FIONA NELSON

Ms Nelson: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. I asked to come as a private citizen because I have been privileged in my career as a teacher and more latterly as a politician to have had a rather interesting variety of experience that has given me a couple of ideas that I thought might be useful. They do not have the imprimatur of any of the organizations I am affiliated with, and therefore I thought I should make it clear they were my own ideas.

As I said on the front of the little leaflet that I have given you, besides being a trustee on the board of education, I have been for some years a member of the Toronto board of health, and more recently I have become chairman of the education committee in the Premier's Council, Competing in the New Global Economy. These three jobs, as well as others, have given me an immense amount of insight into a variety of different approaches to social policy. It seemed to me useful to draw from those areas to talk to you today.

I do not know who said it, but it seems very important to keep in mind that a society can be judged by the way it looks after its most vulnerable citizens, the young, the old and the sick. Your topic, which is the education of the young child, I think is particularly important. As I was thinking about this, it seemed to me particularly useful to go outside education itself to look at some of the things we should keep in mind. I know from the deputants you have had that in fact you have had both the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health address you, and it was from that premise, if you like, that I wanted to talk to you.

It is well demonstrated in the literature and the research that there are strong connections between poverty, poorly educated young mothers especially, and poor perinatal, prenatal and postnatal nutrition and support for those mothers and their babies.

It seems to me that if we are going to talk about enhancing early childhood education, we do not start when the child comes to school. We start when the child is conceived. There has to be some way of making public policy around these areas fit together so that we do not need any more pilot projects; this whole area has been pilot-projected to death. What we need to do is to get on with it and do it because we have the money and because this is the wealthiest province in just about the wealthiest country in the world. We have to develop the will to put our children first.

There is a lot of good evidence on an economic ground, if you like, to say that is a wise thing to do. If we do not particularly like children, it is still a good idea for the future of this country to do so. Last week the Minister of Education (Mr Conway), in a speech where I was present, made the point that by 1997 fully half the paid workforce, as opposed to where they have always been unpaid, will be women. We had better start planning right now for the children of this society if half the women are going to be in the paid workforce. Planning for it means a lot more than just preschool and after-school and lunchtime day care. It means really co-ordinating what we are doing with children with employment policies, with health policies, with all kinds of things.

On the Premier's Council we have a very strong preoccupation with making Ontario competitive in the global economy by stressing science and mathematics. In this month's *Scientific American*—it always has an essay at the back of the magazine—there is an interesting essay by Shirley Malcolm, who is the person connected with human resources at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The title is "Who Will Do Science in the Next Century?" She is looking at girls, the disadvantaged, the presently illiterate, all the kinds of people who at the moment tend to be marginalized in one way or another, and yet they are precisely the resource we have got to draw on if we are going to meet some of the challenges we have to meet.

This August in the *Atlantic Monthly* there was a marvellous article called "Kids as Capital." The headnote said: "When We Grow Old, We Do Not Depend Directly on Our Own Children. Instead, We Depend on Other People's Children." The ramifications of that for public policy, I think, are rather interesting. A couple of years ago, in *Scientific American* again, which is not the most political of magazines but occasionally, just by its discussions, does stray into that area, the lead article was "Infant Mortality in the US." The headnote for it said, "After Many Years of a Steady Drop in the Infant Mortality Rate in the US, the Rate of Decline Has Abruptly Slowed. The Change Coincides with Cutbacks in Programs for Mothers and Children."

As I am sure any of you who have been connected with public health know, one of the clearest indicators of the health status of a society is infant mortality and morbidity. The reason I raise that is because the number of children who die is only the thin edge of the wedge. Behind

them is a huge cadre of children who have been undernourished or deprived in various ways.

The Toronto Board of Health for some years now has totally paid for a little program called Healthiest Babies Possible. It is based on a program that was developed 60 years ago in Montreal by Agnes Higgins, and essentially what it is, is that young mothers at very high risk of delivering low-birthweight early babies are fed oranges, eggs, milk and cod liver oil. Agnes Higgins's experience over 60 years at the Montreal Diet Dispensary was that just doing that vastly increased the chances of those women delivering full-term, full-birthweight babies. That one indicator has a lot to do with deficits in learning, behaviour, health, all kinds of things.

1600

When we talk about early childhood education, it seems to me that if we want to actually cash in on the considerable investment we are now making and that I hope will increase in the future, let's start with better stock. If we were talking about agriculture, we would not think twice about building a superbarn for our super-cows. We would not think twice about having a bull in the field all by himself and feeding him up and doing all kinds of things.

We spend millions on developing really good agricultural stock and when it comes to our people, we seem to let the dice play a rather big hand in what we have to deal with. It seems to me that when Comsoc can come out with an interesting document like this one, Better Beginnings, Better Futures, which is talking about co-ordinating programs among education, health and community services, it is obvious there is coming together a lot of thinking on this subject.

You can go back any number of years. The Senate in 1980 produced this document, Child at Risk, where it once again talked about dealing with prenatal health, support for pregnant women and the support of families while the children were very young. Every year the United Nations Children's Fund puts out this document, the State of the World's Children. It tells us the things we could or should be doing with children all over the world.

A few years ago the Rockefeller Foundation came out with this marvellous document called Good Health at Low Cost. They studied three countries in the Third World that had drastically improved the health status of their people. They had done it with three things: soap and water, immunization and the literacy of women.

The reason I mention all this health stuff is because it is so closely connected to education.

You do not have to go to Kerala in India or Costa Rica or Sri Lanka, as this study did, to see that. You can go to downtown Toronto at Charles G. Fraser Junior School where we have a parent-child dropin centre. The parents who come with the children to this dropin centre in fact are not mothers. They are largely grannies, mostly Portuguese, and they have often come with the idea that it is important to keep children clean and quiet.

We have spent some time talking about water play and sand play, and maybe getting a little dirty and fractious and talking a lot and reading stories, and out of the discussions came the fact that most of the grannies were illiterate. So as an adjunct to the parent-child dropin centre, there is a literacy circle for the grannies, in Portuguese. We brought in some books in Portuguese because it is so important for children to be read to.

The reason I mention this is because if you have the time, this school is very receptive to visitors. The grannies especially love to show off their grandchildren. All grandmothers do; I know that. The program is so simple and so cheap and is such a useful adjunct to our later junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten and primary programs that you can see the payoff. In fact, language developments with children start as soon as they are born. You see the deficits in language really showing up about grade four. By then it is very hard to do remediation. You can do some, but it is much better obviously, and much cheaper, to prevent it.

It is the same with our Healthiest Babies Possible program, the feeding program. We know that to take care of each of these mothers might cost \$600 or \$800 per mother. We know that if we do not do that, these women are often at high risk and go into prenatal intensive care units with their babies. We are spending \$150,000 or \$200,000 per baby and we are starting off often with a damaged baby. It seems so terribly wrong, so stupid, so cruel, to do things that way. We know what needs to be done. What we need to do is get our act together and set some targets and timetables.

Why do we not say that by 1997 when 50 per cent of the paid workforce is going to be women, we will have this amount of program in place, and that by the year 2000 we will make sure that all children are in good shape to benefit from school programs, something such as that? It would be very useful, I think. The advantage you have as a select committee is that you can be very free-ranging in your recommendations, as you have been in your previous reports.

I think that in doing that you can give tremendous impetus to the setting of public policy. Recently, Dr Shapiro was taken away from the Ministry of Education and put in the Cabinet Office. Knowing as I do his ability to think in inclusive terms, I am certainly hopeful that it is going to demonstrate itself in some public policy.

We know how significant some of these factors are in the way children benefit from their education. You can go to this document from the United Nations which was about the environment and look at what Madam Bruntland's committee said about poverty, about children learning, about the education of mothers, the kinds of things that will tie together and give us more bang for our buck in education.

We know that an awful lot of what is driving public policy information at the moment is the fact that health care costs are out of control. We also know from the various reports that you have had done on health policy in Ontario that once again the key is health promotion, prevention, education. We know that among the best purveyors of that kind of education are mothers, and we know that among the best vehicles for that are the schools, which are in every neighbourhood.

It seems we have a lot of the infrastructure there. We have a lot of the raw material. We certainly have the data. The little fragment of poetry by Edna St Vincent Millay with which I started off the written presentation, I think is so important. We have now got to start putting those strands together and actually weave a social fabric that will do the things we want it to do for the benefit of our children, and we have to start informing our public policy, not with control but with love.

I think that if we can do that, the recommendations I am making are not going to be that hard to do. This is not, for goodness sake, Guatemala. We have the money, the education, the infrastructure, the resources. We have certainly got the children. It is time we put our minds to it and figured out how to do it and really set a model for the rest of the world, because I think we could and I think it would be so marvellous for public policy in this province if instead of children coming tagging along behind in public policy, we actually put them first and saw what public policy flows from putting our children first.

I am going to stop there, because I am actually delivering a sermon, and see if you have any questions about this stuff.

The Chair: You may be preaching to the converted.

Ms Nelson: I am glad. I want you to know there are lots of people behind you, poking and prodding and encouraging you along. There is also an enormous amount of stuff out here, much of it produced by this government, that give you the data to do it. While it might be a little more expensive while it is getting under way, in the long term I think it will not only be more humane and more productive; it will also be a lot cheaper.

The Chair: Thank you so much. We appreciate your comments.

Mrs O'Neill: I am sorry, Fiona; I had somehow missed your appointment to the Premier's Council. I congratulate you and I am very glad you are offering your services to that body. I want to ask you to comment on something we dealt with this morning with the special education advisory committee from the ministry.

They are concerned about that particular group of people and some of the things that are coming out as mission statements, and you hinted at it earlier, about the usefulness, I suppose is the best way to capsule their thoughts, of education as opposed to educating the whole child with whatever limitations and/or potentials that are there. Could you say something about that mission statement or the direction in which the education committee of the Premier's Council is going, and maybe allay some fears.

Ms Nelson: I am not sure I can allay any fears and the mission statement is certainly not coming out of the education committee.

Mrs O'Neill: No, I am talking about a comment the minister made.

Ms Nelson: I have very grave concerns about the implications of talking about educating for excellence of the few, rather than educating for competence for the masses, because the fallout from that strikes me as being very wrong-headed and it will not serve our purposes. I think there is a good chance of this report of the Premier's Council—as you know, the first report dealt with the economic framework; the second one is to deal with the people issues—it is around this that we will of course be making some comments about how we get there, the best way to do it and I do not know that those comments should make you too nervous.

I certainly want to make sure that we deal with how we make the best use of our resources for the whole of the province. I am very opposed to the idea of marginalizing a lot of the population of this province, either by not giving them the

services or by having some kind of draconian testing scheme where we figure out who the excellent are and shove them forward and the rest fall by the wayside.

That strikes me as rather a ghastly way to do things, so I do not think that is going to happen. That is one of the reasons I mentioned this article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "Kids as Capital," because what it does is actually give a very interesting economic framework, whether you like children or not, for doing some of these things.

1610

I should not perhaps be so flippant, but I get the impression this is not a child-friendly society. If you look at the way we plan cities and plan resources and infrastructures and everything else, we do not really do it for children very much, and they sort of come as an after-concern, or when they get to be a terrible nuisance or when too many of them are falling by the wayside with drugs or bad health or whatever, instead of in advance.

I am actually hoping we can make some good statements in the Premier's Council report. There are people on the Premier's Council like Fraser Mustard, an enormously enthusiastic advocate for the kinds of stuff I am talking about, and he is very persuasive. Certainly some of the politicians on the Premier's Council are already there. Some of the business people, we are going to have to work on.

Mrs O'Neill: There seems to be in almost all the hearings we have had—it seems to be the thinking of the people who are coming before us—is the preventive mode, much of what you have said earlier today.

Ms Nelson: I am sure. This is not original. I did not write any of this stuff. I just am fortunate to come upon it. I just think we have to reorient our thinking and put the children first and a whole batch of public policy will fall into place.

Mrs O'Neill: Of course it is much more challenging now that we have all of this socioeconomic difference that we did not have in the 1950s or 1960s. We are dealing with a much more complex entity when we bring the child in at any level, whether it is three months or three years or 13, as you have said. It is just a very different social structure that child leaves at the end of any given care taking or care giving time.

Ms Nelson: I have probably given your research chief the quivers with that awful bibliography, but in fact if you look through it you find mentioned in an amazing diversity of

publications, from all kinds of sources, exactly this point of view. I mentioned them mainly to show that this is not an exclusive domain of a few people who are all gushy about children. There are all kinds of quite hardheaded people who have this point of view, and the actual thing I gave you, which just contains my guiding principles and recommendations—I suppose they are rather cheeky, but it seemed to me I might as well put out what my assumptions and principles were.

I am very worried that in our society at the moment—I am talking about North America, worldwide, western governments, whatever—there seems to be a tremendous sort of pulling away of people from one another. I am very worried about this kind of thing, of circling the wagons so that we have this economic bloc here and that economic bloc there and all the rest. It just seems to me that if we are going to circle the wagons we had better make sure everybody is inside and think about things that way. I am really very worried about the kind of self-centredness that I see emerging in a lot of people's thinking, and sort of materialistic, greedy stuff, because that excludes children automatically.

Mrs O'Neill: We had the Toronto board this morning, as you know.

Ms Nelson: I know you did.

Mrs O'Neill: I was surprised they mentioned to us that only one secondary school has a child care component.

Ms Nelson: That is probably because there are close-by elementary schools where they have it. Sometimes it is easier to have it in the elementary school and you have the continuum of care and the children going to school. Very often the principals make arrangements for the students to go over and do practicums in the local elementary school child care centre. We have over 90 altogether. I forget exactly how many.

Mrs O'Neill: Ninety-three, they said. I was thinking that in a much smaller environment where I am from, I think we have three of our high schools that have child care, and that is somewhat for the students as well who happen to—and for the staff of the school, of course, but for the single parents.

Ms Nelson: Yes, we have some student-mother day care, but it is in elementary schools. We try to plug them in before the babies are born if we possibly can, to give them the emotional support and that sort of thing, and then try to get their timetables adjusted so they can continue

nursing the babies. They can even work on a child care credit if they want to. That does seem useful and in fact quite valuable in some cases. It would be nice if that sort of thing could be expanded.

I am particularly worried about adolescent mothers. I think they are terribly vulnerable and so are their babies. I think we really do need to develop some special social policy that is very supportive of those girls. I think they and their babies are at real danger in a whole lot of areas.

Mrs O'Neill: And right now it is very ad hoc.

Ms Nelson: It is. I can remember when my son was a baby—and I had a husband, mother, all kinds of support—and he went through a colicky phase. I remember one night going in to my husband and saying, "If you don't take him, I'm throwing him out the window." If you are 17 and on mother's allowance in a room all by yourself, it is no surprise that there are incidents of child abuse, child battering, whatever, because that shriek is designed to get your attention, and if you have no escape, nasty things can happen. So I think we have to be very careful about that sort of thing.

Ms Poole: Thanks for your presentation, Fiona. I always enjoy your forthrightness and your own very special brand of wit. You will be pleased to note that your presentation meshes very nicely with the Toronto board's this morning, particularly in your concentration on prevention as the key to the whole dilemma.

One thing you have not touched on which I thought we might like to hear your views on was the parenting programs and how that can be a very strong preventive measure and how you see the best way of delivering those programs and reaching people to make sure they are taking advantage of them.

Ms Nelson: I think it is very important that they be in the most appropriate language for whatever the client group is, whatever the neighbourhood. I think it is extremely important that they be neighbourhood-based. We have over 20 of them in Toronto schools. They are very different one from the other.

They are not expensive programs. They tend to have a great deal of informality to them, which makes them much more welcoming and much gentler in their approach. They are not didactic at all.

They strike me as being immensely valuable, because I think that a lot of care givers of young children are very isolated, just the way our society is structured, and it is extremely impor-

tant to bring them together to share their ideas, their problems, their concerns, whatever.

You can teach a whole lot in very gentle ways. You can teach about nutrition and meal preparation, community gardening, any number of things, through that kind of medium. As I mentioned with the Charles G. Fraser Junior Elementary School program with the Portuguese grannies, out of it grew a literacy circle. In the other parent-child dropin centres, other kinds of interesting continuing education programs have arisen from the stated needs of that particular group.

I do not think any of them are like any others. They are all very reflective of whatever the school neighbourhood is, and they are conducted in a wide variety of languages, because we know that in dealing with the development of language in children, it does not matter what the language is as long as it is rich and it is used well, there is lots of reading, that kind of thing, and the transference from one language to another, from Portuguese to English or whatever, is a minimal problem. So I think that they are a superb idea and it would be really nice if they were a part of public policy.

In my recommendations I also mentioned that I think it would be useful to reinstitute the well-baby clinics. I do not know how many of you are familiar with well-baby clinics, but they were abandoned some time ago and I think that is a great shame, because while they were more structured than a parent-child dropin, they had a lot of the same value and they started as soon as the baby was born. You did not wait until the child was sick or anything else. On a regular basis you went—and they were usually held in schools—and the local public health doctor and public health nurse came. The babies were weighed and just looked at in their development, and if there was a failure to thrive, it would be noted early. The immunizations were kept track of; all kinds of things.

I think that they were a marvellously inexpensive, local, gentle sort of way just to keep track of the development of all the children. Public health gets about three per cent of the health budget and remediation and treatment gets 97 per cent, and it would be really neat if you could just double the amount of money in public health to six per cent. You could do so much in areas such as that that would be so valuable, and I think that would tie in very much with early childhood education.

Ms Poole: I suspect that not all communities are fortunate enough to have that kind of enlightened attitude, reaching parents and trying

to give them some more parenting skills and get them more involved with their children. What I am trying to think of is a province-wide policy and how we could get a package out there.

I like your ideas of making it neighbourhood-based and I like your ideas of having it informal, language-oriented, inviting not only parents but also the grannies or the care givers. I think it is crucial we reach those 88 per cent of the children who are not in a formal day care.

What I am wondering is, is the board of education the best vehicle? I am not sure that in all areas of the province we have that wonderful relationship between public health and the boards of education, and I am wondering how you think it could work best.

Ms Nelson: I believe our board of education and our board of health in Toronto are the only ones where in fact a trustee sits on the board of health. That started in 1973—I know because I did it—because it seemed so important. We had by that time abandoned the well-baby clinics and that sort of thing.

I do not know if the board of education is the best institution, but I certainly think the local elementary schools are the best place, because they are all in neighbourhoods.

I really do not care who is doing it, I just think it should be done. That is why I say in this thing, for goodness sake, let's stop all the territorial stuff. Who cares? The point is, the money is there, the children are there, the data are there; let's just get on with it.

Ms Poole: The only problem I really see about it being done through the school boards is the fact that, for the most part, you are talking about parents of children who are already four, five or six years old and it would be very nice to be reaching parents from the age of zero on.

Ms Nelson: Sure, but you could have the Lamaze classes or the prenatal classes and the well-baby clinics in schools as well, the parent-child drop-in centres can be in schools; all kinds of things.

Ms Poole: I am just not sure what sector we are reaching with the Lamaze clinics.

Ms Nelson: You have a good point there.

Ms Poole: They may well be the people who probably need it least, because they might have a university degree, they might have all sorts of early childhood education experience.

Ms Nelson: Yes.

Ms Poole: I am thinking about the people for whom maybe English is a second language, who

have not had a great deal in the way of parenting skills, and how will we reach them?

Ms Nelson: I know in the city of Toronto the board of health has a large lorry, bus, truck, I do not know what it is, from the immigrant women's health clinic, and it goes around to the factories and negotiates with the factory owners to allow it to be on the premises long enough to give women—

Very often, the immigrant women, especially if they are Mediterranean women or Muslim women, that sort of thing, are not allowed out by themselves. I must say that rubs me a bit the wrong way, but they are not, and so they often do not get their own health taken care of. By going to the factory sites and that sort of thing, with a multilingual medical staff, we can often do a great deal of important education of women about their own health, about pregnancy, about birth control, any number of things that they would not maybe get any other place. A bookmobile is a lovely idea, and you can do it with all sorts of things. In rural areas, where it would be very difficult perhaps for people to come to a centre, make it mobile.

I do not know that you can have one solution for everything and for every place and for everybody, and I know that local autonomy is important, but I am quite sure that there could be facilitating policies, accompanied by some cash.

Ms Poole: It is always a lovely incentive, is it not?

Ms Nelson: It helps. It certainly does help. It seems self-evident, but if you can point out to people the economic advantage of doing things—plus the fact that I think it is rather a lot kinder to prevent problems than to try to deal with them later on. We know the statistics on deficits in learning and behaviour that go with premature births and low birth weights, that sort of thing. We know that you cannot teach hungry children. It is not a big-time secret.

I think it would be just lovely if we actually stopped putting up all the fences and just took them down and said, "We have to get to these children and we'll do it any way that is suitable, wherever." I don't care if it goes out on a snowmobile as long as it gets to them. I know in the country they take the day care to the farms because it is not possible to take the farm children to the day care. I have no problem with that.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation.

The committee stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Do not forget to do your homework tonight like the good little pupils

that you are, and come back with some direction for—

Interjection.

The Chair: Yes, we are here.

Ms Poole: Can we do the homework at lunchtime? We are not dealing with this until—

The Chair: Until four o'clock.

Ms Poole: I just have other homework tonight.

The Chair: I do not care when you do your homework, just do it.

Mrs O'Neill: You are going to guarantee that

we are going to start at four tomorrow, are you? I have to leave for Ottawa at five.

The Chair: When I say guarantee, it depends if we are here at two and we start with our witnesses. If you all keep that in mind, we will start at four.

Mr Furlong: And it depends if the chair holds us to the half-hour or hour.

The Chair: The chair will be dutiful in trying to encourage all wide-ranging discussion.

The committee adjourned at 1627.

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Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Select Committee on Education

Early Childhood Education



Second Session, 34th Parliament

Thursday 8 February 1990

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday 8 February 1990

The committee met at 1017 in committee room 1.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (continued)

The Chair: I would like to call the meeting to order. I have a quorum. If you could charge up your coffee cups there and come ahead, we would like to have you. We welcome the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. Perhaps, Betty Moseley-Williams, you could introduce your delegation more formally and get started.

ONTARIO SEPARATE SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Good morning. My name is Betty Moseley-Williams. I am the first vice-president of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. I am the chairperson of the English section of the separate school board in Nipissing and I live in North Bay. On my right is Pat Meany. He is the chairman of the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board and he lives in Mississauga. Caroline DiGiovanni is on my left. Caroline is the research director for the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. We are making the presentation this morning on behalf of our president, Omer Gagné, who, along with our executive director, had a commitment that had to be met also. We do thank you for the opportunity to be here.

As you know, and I am sure have been told, the time frame for developing our document has been very short. However, we trust that the recommendations will enhance and be some help to you in your deliberations.

As representatives of Catholic school boards across the province, we understand the practicality of divisions in organizing school programs, determining costs, arranging for appropriate allocation of space, etc. However, it is as parents and other caring members of the community that we take on the responsibility of trusteeship. Therefore, we bring to our observations a community approach, not necessarily the approach of professional educators. The young child develops at a tremendous rate during these early years. What is useful is continuity; what

becomes troublesome is setting up artificial partitions between the stages.

The Catholic education community as a whole supports the concept of the school as a focal point for the neighbourhood. We also strongly endorse the role of the school as a support for the family, because we recognize the parents as the first educators of the child. In this context it is not surprising that out of 54 Roman Catholic separate school boards, 52 have already instituted junior kindergarten programs in English and/or French. All 54 of our member boards now offer senior kindergarten classes.

There is an appendix attached and it is with respect to the junior and senior kindergartens in the separate school boards in the province. There are also statistics showing the enrolment in the total province in the separate and public school boards.

What these statistics indicate is acceptance by the Roman Catholic boards of the inclusion of the young child within the school population. We are not advocating a change in the voluntary enrolment of children in junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten. Parents who wish to keep their young children at home should have every support in doing so. We do, however, agree with the mandating of junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten throughout the province. It is important for every school board to be able to offer these educational opportunities for the families who want to take advantage of them.

At the same time, initiatives such as preschool child care centres in the school, child care for school-aged children and all-day senior kindergarten give families who need it additional safe, well-supervised care for their children. What trustees want is the ability to be flexible in meeting the various needs of each local community.

We welcome the announcement by the Ministry of Education last spring of support for junior kindergarten-senior kindergarten programs, especially the move to allow full-day senior kindergarten where space is available. What we would propose as a further initiative in support of these early years would be provincial grants for outreach programs that would bring parents and their young children into the school together for a while during the day. This would not be intended

to supplant a well-organized curriculum for JK or SK; rather, it opens up the school during the day for parents to take part in parenting courses, to discuss child development and to build confidence in their own skills as primary educators. Parents should be able to trust that their own values are reflected in the school system where they have placed their child.

We look to this select committee to recommend that pilot projects be made available across the province to allow boards to develop within their communities the kinds of parenting courses that would fit their needs. For example, in rural areas where transportation is a factor, the parents who participate in the course could accompany their child one or two days a week at staggered times so as not to disrupt the normal movement of children to and from school. In urban centres it may be necessary to provide interpreters to assist with classes for parents who do not speak English or French. Each board would have to work out its own plan in detail.

What we emphasize with this recommendation is a broad view of the select committee's general topic, lifelong education, to include provisions for the early years of the child as part of the family unit. We know that parents of young children may feel themselves lacking in skills or preparation for their daunting task. Given that the school is a central institution in the life of every community, why not put it to use in providing what may be missing from the social supports or the safety net of these critical early years?

Mr Meany: Under the heading "Child Care in Schools," school boards are keenly interested in the joint initiatives between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services to increase the availability of child care centres in schools and to provide child care for school-aged children in the hours before and after class times. The child care development program announced by the Honourable John Sweeney in June 1987 indicated the necessity of close co-operation between the two ministries.

Responsibility for the operation of child care programs remains within the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The preferred model for community-based child care begins with the formation of nonprofit organizations to attend to the staffing and daily operation of these centres.

By providing capital funding for child care spaces in new schools, the Ministry of Education clearly supports child care initiatives. In the joint communication with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Child Care for School-Aged Children, direction was given to school boards

that "Whenever and wherever possible, space not required for education programs should be made available so that a variety of child care services are provided and so that access to those services is improved." All of this activity looks very good in terms of meeting an urgent need in today's society. Catholic school boards welcome the attention that is being directed towards solving a dilemma many parents face every day. We must meet the needs of the single parent or families facing the pressures of tough economic times. However, we are obliged to bring to this committee and others our observations about the problem areas we perceive.

First, the numbers of child care centres that have been announced in the throne speeches and elsewhere are too low to cover the province, in our estimation. In 1987 we were told that 150 new child care centres would be in place in schools by 1990-1991. By 1994, according to the 1989 throne speech, 200 new school-based facilities will have been built. This sort of announcement is always a tease to the public and a headache for school boards. We are persuaded by current demand that those projections will not come close to meeting the needs of the 1990s.

A global approach is more palatable. We suggest that a blanket statement be made by the Ministry of Education that plans for all new school buildings must include child care space in order to be granted approval. What about alterations to older schools to incorporate child care? This implies more capital grants, but without them, boards that are not building new schools have little hope of access to this new approach to community use of board facilities.

Every social indicator we rely on confirms the need for supervised child care. Schools are the logical sites for this care within the community. What we are seeking is the decisive kind of leadership that would give school boards the ways and means to plan for this kind of use in the normal routine. We ask you as legislators to recommend making amendments to the Education Act, which would recognize the reality of having child care centres available for all schools.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Those boards which are growing rapidly will tell you that classroom space is filled to capacity before the shovel goes into the ground. New school communities must cope with portable classrooms, teacher shortages and other problems during the construction phase. Adding the child care facility may increase the capacity of the school but it also adds the dimension of seeking an appropriate organi-

zation to run the nonprofit centre. This is hard to accomplish before the community has come together and gained a sense of itself.

One other difficulty that boards face over this issue involves dealing with two ministries simultaneously. Many work hours get eaten up checking on matters between two bureaucracies. This kind of activity gives new meaning to the word "frustration."

On a positive note, let us offer some recommendations from our perspective. First, we urge the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services to continue to work closely together on all matters relating to child care in the schools. We would hope that at some point soon a combined office would become the single source of information and directives about child care in the schools. This could be accomplished by building on the work which has already been done by joint undertakings of the two ministries.

Assisting the organization of nonprofit community boards to manage the child care function in the school adds a burden to growth boards just when they are experiencing the greatest combination of pressures. They run the risk of not doing the foundation work properly and this leads to inefficiency and wastage. We recommend that the combined ministries develop secondment programs that would make skilful community liaison workers available for specified periods to boards experiencing rapid growth.

Such a co-ordinator could also help to prepare principals and staff members to accept the role of the child care providers. This kind of personnel assistance is urgently required, but Catholic boards, strapped to recruit teachers and specialists, often cannot find the budget to offer this kind of help. The local board would retain the right to approve the selected individual to ensure compatibility with the community setting.

1030

Mr Meany: Keeping the focus on the young child: As we said in our opening, we welcome the opportunity to share with you a focus on the young child within the education system in Ontario. In our frenzied, technocratic, information-bombarded, headlong slide into the next century, perhaps society has to be reminded of the intrinsic value of childhood. Experts in human development (White, etc) and many popular writers (Postman and others) are telling us what caring parents have always known: The early years form the most significant stage in the physical, intellectual, moral and emotional growth of each individual.

It is our responsibility within the publicly funded education system to ensure that physical space, sound programs and well-formed teachers are in place to enhance the learning processes of childhood. We have already dealt with the use of school buildings for parental support groups, child care centres and kindergarten. Let us turn our attention now to program needs and teacher requirements.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Trustees in the boardroom are not per se experts in education. We must approach our decision-making guided by our professional staff and by our participation in public policy discussions. It is therefore not helpful to the process to be faced with a rapid turnover of program directives issued from the Mowat Block all in the same area of concern.

For example, the 1979 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child, *To Herald a Child*, spread the good news of a holistic approach to children within the school and social structure. This was followed by the Ministry of Education's Report of the Early Primary Education Project, 1985, which gave shape and direction to strategies for activity-based learning in the first years of school. School boards that picked up on these reports then set up pilot projects, teacher in-service opportunities, information nights for parents and budget for new supplies.

The latest initiatives, announced in December 1989 and called *Restructuring the Education System*, include a section on JK-SK entitled "Early Years" and then place grades 1 and 2 under the heading "Formative Years." The break between these two sections is a change from earlier thinking.

For school boards, the problem is in the planning and implementation of these initiatives. To make a whole system move in even a slightly different direction requires careful preparation. The changes under discussion now for the early years throw everything into the hopper at once: child care, universal JK, all-day SK, lower pupil-teacher ratios in grades 1 and 2 and a shift in teaching style towards activity-based learning.

Our request to this committee is, first and foremost, to recommend the development of a policy on the early years that will build on the foundation documents already released, without attempting to set out in yet another new direction. The policy should include strategies for the integration of preschool child care programs into the junior and senior kindergarten curriculum. Programs for grades 1 and 2 should also flow from a consistent approach to learning that

remains child centred and activity based. Communication to parents and other care givers must be greatly enhanced in order to fulfil the promise of an integrated, consistent approach to children in their early years. The role of the parents as the first educators must be clearly supported.

Mr Meany: Teacher preparation: Finally, our school boards recognize the critical responsibility of the teacher during these early years. This is of special importance to maintaining the culture of our Catholic schools, where the teacher imparts a way of learning by word and by example. Moral development, too, takes root at an early age.

We recognize that there is still a distinction between the early childhood education training required for a child care worker and the university degree-plus teacher certification requirements for an Ontario classroom. What we can observe from the employer's point of view is a need to recognize in the process of teacher certification the value of the developmental approach to young children included in ECE courses. A combination of the two training modes, plus a personality that is attuned to the young learner, would be expected to produce an ideal teacher for the early years.

Teachers can provide the skilful observations that form the critical link between a child's individual rate of development and early identification of a learning disability. Recognizing this level of observation as a key component in meeting each child's needs within the school system should give appropriate status to the teachers of these early years. Untold hours of frustration and costly programming can be prevented if a procedure of early identification, avoiding pejorative labels, is instituted in all schools and given the respect it deserves from other levels of administration.

We hope you will recommend in your report that all professional educators must be required to spend a portion of their teaching careers gaining practical experience with young children in the early years. Rather than setting the junior kindergarten-senior kindergarten unit apart from the rest of the school, the school community should support it as the most important place in the building. Administrators making priority recommendations for the budget each year should visit grades 1 and 2 classrooms before they give the board members their final report. The health of the system can be monitored, we believe, by the health of the youngest clients in the system.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: The Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association is pleased to bring you our observations and recommendations from the trustees' point of view. It has been a good exercise for us to consider the school system from the young child's viewpoint. There is a simple and well-known gospel passage which recognizes that we cannot enter fully into our adult lives unless we retain the joy, the delight, the honesty and the simplicity of the child. Thank you for hearing us. We wish you well in the work ahead of you. We would be very pleased to answer questions or explain.

The Chair: We are pleased that with your excellent brief there are a number of questioners who have indicated they wish to ask questions. I have four speakers indicating to me that they wish to speak: Mr Johnston, Mrs O'Neill, Ms Poole and Mr Neumann.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you very much for the brief. There was a literate flow to it that I liked a lot in terms of the writing and also in terms of the emphasis on the role of parents, something Yvonne, I know, has been noting in several of the presentations we have had. It is very gratifying to see that coming from the boards. I think a lot of parents feel excluded in some cases from their children's educations and it is really nice to see that emphasis placed in your brief.

It was fascinating to see how advanced your system was in terms of the provision of JK-SK in comparison with the public system, the public system just now, seemingly in the last couple of years, moving to a much larger role for JK-SK, and yours having been established pretty much now for, I guess, the last 10 years or so by the looks of it. Would that be accurate?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Yes, at least 10, maybe a little better than that.

Mr Meany: More than 10.

Mr R. F. Johnston: More I guess, even back to—I guess, looking at the trends, you can say that back to the mid-1970s that would have reflected just the growth in population at that time. That was interesting. But I was not clear from your report in terms of the role of child care in your school system, in terms of the numbers of centres that there are in your existing schools, as well as, of course, the new-growth schools with the new program. Can you give me some idea of how that has gone? What portion of your boards has a fair amount of child care in the schools?

Mr Meany: In the growth areas, which is where I come from, we cannot do it except in new schools. There are a number in the new schools.

It is mandated now. With regard to the rest of the province, I think Mrs DiGiovanni probably can give you an idea.

Mrs DiGiovanni: When we prepared the statistics in the back, we were not able to ask the school boards to give their final reports on child care, so we do not have the hard numbers. The boards with older schools have found it extremely difficult to renovate the schools. There are, however, in many cases agreements with a local parish hall.

The Chair: We have some experts with us, if we might just for a second interrupt. I welcome you. The Queen's Park Child Care Centre decided to visit us, along with Mr Johnston Jr. I am pleased to welcome you all. I hope you do not mind the interruption, because I think this is really part of our job.

Mr Meany: I think they illustrate some of our points.

The Chair: Yes, I think they do. It was nice that they came in on cue like that. We very much appreciate that—

Mr Neumann: Mr Johnston, in announcing that he is retiring, has someone ready to—

The Chair: Yes, take his seat. He is warming it up.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I want him to have an honest job.

Mr Villeneuve: He has a new sweater on, you notice.

1040

The Chair: Again, welcome to the organization. We appreciate having you here for a bit, and also Mr Johnston Jr, which will help out on the committee and I am sure raise the level of its intensity very much. Thank you very much. Where is the photographer when we really need him?

Mr R. F. Johnston: Sorry, Caroline.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I feel right at home. It suits me.

We have not been able to survey consistently across the province, but we can observe that there are a number of relationships that have sprung up. If we can use this base in the school, that is the preferred model. In many places in Toronto there are schools that have been able to do that if the enrolment allows the use of the space, or we have made arrangements with the local parish hall, that the day care centre in the parish hall walks the children over to the local school. This kind of thing is quite compatible with our school

system anyway. It is a good task. I think we may undertake to do it now at your suggestion.

Mr R. F. Johnston: It will be very interesting to see, especially that other connection which is not available to the public system in the same kind of way, obviously, in terms of the parish hall tie-in. It would be interesting to see.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: I just want to say on this that our board has about 9,500 pupils and we have day care in the schools in Mattawa. It was set up to serve a specific need in a small community that felt isolated from some of the larger agendas in the city. In the city we have French and English and they are attached to—these are all in schools and some of them have a parent component, and we have one in the west. I think that maybe in some of the areas where the need was perceived, because they are away from large social service agencies, it has been put in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: One of the things that has come up a number of times is class size, and you just referred to it as part of the pot-pourri of issues that are out there. We have had a number of recommendations now come before us around the class size for junior kindergarten. The most recent was a differentiated class size recommendation of 15 for JK and 18, I think, for SK, if I recall. We have also had the notion of having a maximum of 20 in any kindergarten.

Obviously you have looked at this issue as an association and I am wondering if you have done any analysis at all about what the impact would be in terms of space, in terms of need for teachers, etc, if we were to move to something much lower for the JK to make it tie in more closely to what we have now in child care, for an example. Have you looked at the range of impacts that would have in terms of teacher shortages, etc, those kinds of things?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We have not done an in-depth study to say what the impact would be, except that we would know it would change it and need for physical plant would increase dramatically. Of course I was thinking when you said those numbers that it just sounds very familiar to a couple of contracts I have looked at. I think money would also be a very big issue if they were to—

Mr R. F. Johnston: What is the range that exists now, do you think, within your board? Do you have an idea of what it might be for JK or SK?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: That is my board; that is ours.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yours is that?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Fifteen, 18, 20, give or take.

Mr R. F. Johnston: What about—

Mr Meany: I think it is the same, around 20.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Have you done a survey of that at all to see what they are?

Mrs DiGiovanni: No, we have not done an in-depth survey across—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Would it be easy to do or hard to do? I am just thinking that our report is—as you say, we are not really going to finish writing it until the end of March. It might be interesting to see what the reality is in your system. We have averages, but averages really do not tell us a lot in comparison with what a board-by-board survey would.

Mr Keyes: Have the range.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I think it would be worth doing. Again, it may turn out to be a matter of contracts at the boards.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I will pass and let—

The Chair: I just thought that in the interest of our visitors perhaps you would not mind just a short recess to greet our other guests.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I did not mean to—

The Chair: No, I did not mean to do that too, but maybe there are some people who want to talk to the leaders for a few minutes, if our delegation do not mind a short interruption. We will make sure we get back and give you an opportunity. It is just five minutes, in case you want to chat with the leaders.

The committee recessed at 1045.

1052

The Chair: Perhaps I can ask the committee to reconvene, please. We thank our visitors and maybe we will see you again some time. Thank you for coming by.

I very much appreciate the committee taking a bit of an unusual step. It brought back memories of when I was the chairman of the social services administration board in Sudbury and responsible for day care. I had to bring my son a couple of times in somewhat the same situation. I very much appreciate it. I think it was appropriate for what we were discussing. I very much thank the delegation for the interruption and allowing us to proceed that way. I appreciate your patience very much.

We have a second questioner; Mrs O'Neill.

Mrs O'Neill: I want to back to page 3. As Mr Johnston said, I am quite interested in your

parenting. I am not surprised that separate school boards are still talking about parenting as a very significant part of their system. Have you any school board where this is taking place or any boards that are doing this? It looks like a day program for parents. If that is the case, who in the board is offering it? What kind of animators or monitors do you have in the programs?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We have one program that was started in North Bay. This has been presented as information at our annual meeting and it will probably be done again. It was started as an infant stimulation program through St Joseph's General Hospital and then connected to the school board. What we have is the mothers, and the odd father, come to the school and we teach parenting skills. They take one credit in high school also, at the basic or general level. We have one teacher on staff. We have something like 72 volunteers. We have a child care component; that is the volunteer. They bring their children to St Joseph's and the children are looked after while the moms go to class.

It is looking to be extended to offer more so that these women would be able to complete their secondary schooling. That is in the investigative stage right now. We feel that the need, certainly in our area and we are sure in the province, is very great because in a small community like ours we have a waiting list now of 72 people to go into this program. The feeling is that if we do not—I do not know whether the word "reclaim" is fair—help these young women and their children, the next generation is going to have a lot to contend with.

Mrs O'Neill: Would you be a little more specific? Is this connected to a secondary school, an elementary school that is close by a secondary school?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: No. We have put it into a place of its own. We moved it from school to school. We started it in one school and then we needed that space, so we moved it to another school, and we needed that space so we went to the St Joseph's Mother House and asked if we could rent space on a permanent basis, so we are there now.

Mrs O'Neill: So this is a day program for parents, mothers mostly.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Single parents and their children.

Mrs O'Neill: Of elementary school-age children, usually primary.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: It is for younger children even.

Mrs O'Neill: I am really pleased to hear that even one board has made that kind of commitment.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Some of you would remember the community school programs that were very popular in Ontario a few years ago, and the granting was stopped. Under those grants, programs were offered that you could bring parents, young parents or old ones, into the school with their children and provide some parenting skills.

In our area, we used to bring the children in, the babies, and they were looked after by the grade 8 religion class and it was worked into that program with the child care worker. The moms came to a class where we would have a paediatrician and a nutritionist and people on housing, and we taught very basic skills. We had a housekeeper from the hospital come and tell how to buy detergent, what to look for. They were very basic.

Those programs were so popular that we were able to provide them in two or three schools in the city. It was not a great cost to the ministries. When the grant was lost, it was lost, but they offered a great deal in Ontario. They were good programs.

Mrs O'Neill: Seventy-two volunteers in one program is absolutely outstanding.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We could not run that program without volunteers. You know we could not.

Mr Meany: Could I add to that? We have been talking about actual formal courses existing. That is what the question was, but quite common are informal relationships—volunteers, systems of volunteers—where a lot of benefits such as the bonding between the parent and the school, the trust that grows in the teachers—because if you have a small child, it is a big thing to send that kid off to strangers. And many other benefits such as, for instance, understanding ways of teaching which you may not be familiar with, a parent who has grown up in earlier times—all that works. In our board it is very, very common. We have a huge system. We see development of courses such as Betty talked about coming very naturally out of that sort of already existing environment.

Mrs DiGiovanni: If I can add one other component, I hope you do not mind, but there are programs for offering English as a second language to adults. Very often it fits compatibly into a school day.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes, the Toronto Board of Education brought that to our attention yesterday.

Mrs DiGiovanni: Yes. Metro Separate and other school boards that have populations which need English courses fit it into the school day, baby sitting is provided, and the content of those courses is often arranged around issues that the parents deal with on a regular basis, family associations with the school system, for example.

Mrs O'Neill: I have one short one.

The Chair: Dianne had a supplementary and then I will come back to you.

Ms Poole: Just a supplementary. Mrs O'Neill has actually touched on the area I was going to ask you about. I think this is a marvellous idea and I really think it is wonderful that you are taking this kind of initiative. I am wondering if we can adapt it to the situation, though, where the parent might not necessarily be at home or be a student and be available to come during the day. Is it possible to adapt it to either a lunchtime scenario or before school? Have you tried anything along this line to try to reach the parents who are not at home during the day?

1100

Mrs Moseley-Williams: The type of program that I was talking about is of course geared to parent and child being there. I said to somebody it is because we offer controversial things like religion and family life. Because of the way our programs are developed, there is a handbook for parents in most of the religion and family life programs.

I know it is easier in smaller boards like mine to invite parents to all professional development days. They are sent the agenda and the program and the speaker is somebody who would not ordinarily come to North Bay. We had Dr White speak to the teachers one night. The next day we put him on a school bus and took him to all the schools. He charged us, we thought, a horrific amount of money—it was \$500—but we think we got 19 hours of adult education out of him before he left. Those are the kinds of things that do happen and we are bringing parents in, but not specifically to the type of program I was talking about earlier.

Ms Poole: It would be marvellous if we could somehow adapt, but it is difficult with its being a daytime program. I just wondered if you had been able to work out anything for those working parents who could not attend for much of the day.

Mr Meany: I think flexibility is what is at issue here, and whatever is done should create a framework within which flexibility can occur. I think that is the answer to that point.

Ms Poole: Just one final point: Have you invited grandparents or people who might be the primary care giver for the child? Have you invited them into the school for these daytime programs, or is it pretty well just parents?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: No. In the community school, anybody in the community can certainly come in, whether he is the care giver by day or whether he is the parent. I think we bring grandparents into the school but it is probably not for that purpose.

Ms Poole: I think your, not project, that is not what it is, but your initiative has taken place in North Bay, where they may not have the same proportion of grandparents caring for the child during the day as perhaps we might have in the inner city. That could again be part of the pilot project to specifically stress for grandparents and other care givers to join this kind of initiative.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I think as Mr Meany indicated, flexibility is what is really important to boards and I do not think there is any board that would prevent either kinds of caretakers from coming in. There are a large number of grandmothers and aunts or extended family looking after children in city schools. There is nothing to prevent that, but what we need to know is how far we can proceed with these things.

Ms Poole: Whether you can welcome it.

Mrs DiGiovanni: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: My last two questions are very factual. I was under the interpretation that all new school buildings included in their plans child care centres, but you are indicating to me that is not a mandated program. That is still very voluntary on the part of boards. Is that correct?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: I think the program is not mandatory. I think it is correct that you have to allow for child care space in new buildings.

Mrs O'Neill: On the bottom of page 5 you suggest that a blanket statement be made by the ministry that plans for all new schools must include child care spaces.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I am afraid I am responsible for that wording and it should be clearer. It is true that plans, to be approved, must include the allocation of space for day care centres. That is already in place for new buildings. Whether the centres are organized and put into place is now a matter of organizing it through these nonprofit groups.

Mrs O'Neill: And you feel in some cases the spaces actually remained empty once they had been built? I have not heard of that.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: There could not have been very many, because the newest school that we built—it just opened last year or a year and a half ago—did not have the space, so there have not been that many schools built under this, I would not think.

Mrs O'Neill: I think we have discovered it is about 20, because your school would have been approved before this policy came in. This is what we found, that the schools that were approved for the 1989 year did not come under the policy because the policy came in in late 1988.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: Yes.

Mrs O'Neill: It was only the schools that were approved for opening in 1989 in September, or 1990 or 1991, where it will come out. Anyway, maybe that should be clarified, because I do think that is, as you say, already in place. At least, that has been my interpretation. There may be some secondary schools where the take-up is slower until they fit it into their programming.

My final question: I have a little bit of difficulty with your recommendation on page 10 that all professional educators be required to spend a portion of their teaching careers gaining practical experience. You are talking there, I would presume, about secondary school teachers as well. Correct? If I read it right off the page, that is what I would think.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: All teachers, yes. I thought all teachers went through the same program.

Mrs O'Neill: At the faculties of education, as you know, they have to choose their streams of study and certainly their practicum. At the present time, teacher education is under review, as you know, but as far as I know, they take either intermediate and senior or junior and primary or—

Interjection.

Mrs O'Neill: Yes. This would certainly involve major reform, certainly at the practicum, and I am not so sure about the theory and I am not so sure that an ad hoc program that is thrown into the middle of one year is what you want to achieve.

Mr Meany: I was only going to say that in a practical sense we are really directing this towards the continuity, so to the extent that there is streaming and different teachers being trained going different directions, then we are referring to those who teach at the primary level.

Mrs O'Neill: Certainly those who are in elementary would, and it has been brought to our attention that more and more of the elementary

principals have had primary experience, which no doubt is very helpful.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I think it was rather in a global sense of some attention being paid. People have to go through various stages to proceed through the system after their certification as a teacher in whatever section they have decided to proceed. To become a vice-principal or a principal there are courses that must be taken, or to become a supervisory officer.

I think we were looking at it broadly so that in the course of some of those qualifying procedures they would have some orientation that is very specific to the young child. If they have not chosen it in their teaching career, if they proceed through administration, they should at least have some necessary exposure.

Mrs O'Neill: Thank you for clarifying that.

Mr Meany: I think basically here we are talking about two different philosophies, as it were. We feel that one being academic needs more of the practical, the involvement with the young child. I hope it is clear.

Mrs O'Neill: I do think that is one of the requirements of the principals' course now, that you have some training in each of the three levels. At least that is my understanding; it could be incorrect.

Mr Neumann: I am also looking at page 10 and your comments on early identification of learning disabilities. First of all, I wanted a clarification of your reference to the identification avoiding pejorative labels. Are you referring here to the present system of the IPRC, where you identify the learning disability, the behaviour or whatever is identified? Are you referring to that as being pejorative or are you talking about something else? It is not clear from what you have said.

Mrs DiGiovanni: I think the labelling at the IPRC level should not be regarded as pejorative. It is diagnostic in many ways.

Mr Neumann: Yes. What do you mean by avoiding pejorative labels?

Mrs DiGiovanni: I think if the identification is imposed at too early a stage perhaps there will be too much focus on that particular area of identification, without allowing the other kinds of development to take place. A parent, who has already—for example, hearing impaired—who has already been well aware of his or her child's functioning and disability, can participate in the kind of program that needs to be put into place. But a child who is going through the early stages of development may change in range from the

very first entry into school to the ability to proceed as a later entry. So an IPRC process as early as kindergarten is perhaps not helpful to all the children. So we would tag and identify by observation, given a list of diagnostic criteria, but without a final version of that labelling unless it is clearly indicated by that kind of disability.

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Mr Neumann: So what you are talking about is a less formal system of identifying children who are at risk than the IPRC process, which you see coming later in the—

Mrs DiGiovanni: —coming a bit later in the developmental stage of the young child, yes. There should be clear criteria for observation for the teacher, but I would suggest that what we meant by that wording is to avoid a final labelling unless it is so specifically indicated that it needs to be done. In other words, avoid an identification that is so fixed that it begins to work against the ability of the child to be integrated into classes.

Mr Neumann: I have a question. I could ask many questions on this subject, but I will focus in on something that we have talked with some other groups about. That is the entry point and the identification and the fear that some groups have expressed that information that has been gathered about children who have had contact with other agencies in the community—public health, the children's aid society, maybe parks and recreation, maybe some other agencies—that there be good communication and networking so that at the entry point school system, the teacher has all the information necessary to provide a proper program for the child. Do you feel that we have done a good job there or do you have any recommendations? You have not spoken to any recommendations. Do you have any thoughts on what we should be looking at?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: I know each local board must have that in place, and when you were talking, I thought, at entry level of junior kindergarten or senior kindergarten, that the public health is involved at the school level. I guess sometimes coming from smaller communities we forget that we have a lot of advantages in some of those areas. I was trying to review the process, and the children in our system and the parents, that whole entry process, the public health is there and the teacher and the coordinator. It is a very concerted effort.

Mr Neumann: Perhaps I could ask this way. Has your trustees' association done any analysis in comparing what various boards do at that entry

point in evaluating the various approaches and the networking with other agencies in the community?

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We have not done that in depth, but I think that also is something that could be done and could be worked on, because obviously, from the questions, it is very different in areas of the province, and the extent to which the social agencies are involved seems at variance, so we would be able to do that within our boards. That is not that difficult.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: I say that for you, that is not that difficult.

Mr Keyes: In an awkward position.

Mrs DiGiovanni: Yes, I am going home; you do that.

Mr Neumann: I think it could be quite a big task actually.

The Chair: I thank you very much for your excellent presentations, which everyone has received with a lot of interest. It is always nice for this committee to get the northern point of view every once in while and I appreciate the North Bay point of view.

Mr R. F. Johnston: The near north.

Mr Meany: I would like to make a comment that I noticed myself when this was all put together. A quick reading does not get it all. There is a lot of thought and research behind this. It could have been expanded into a book but we had only a short time.

The Chair: Well, we appreciate the primer, and you know, that is it.

Mrs Moseley-Williams: We thank you all so very much. We appreciate the opportunity to come and present our views and maybe take some of your questions back to our association and our member boards. It is good for us to be able to report that there is an interest in what is going on and if we are going to be able to effect change, that it is going to be good for the children in our system. So we do thank you very much for that. I was very negligent when, at the beginning, I was to introduce Earle McCabe, who is our executive deputy director.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Who?

The Chair: Earle who?

Mrs Mosely-Williams: He is our assistant deputy director and he tells me what I am supposed to say. Thank you very much.

The Chair: I am sure you have some input. Thank you very much.

Our next group of witnesses is from the the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario. Martha Schroder, Gunter Schroder and Angela Smith, welcome. I know you were here earlier when we had the little interruption, and that is why we are a little late starting with your presentation. I hope you do not mind and I appreciate your patience. The floor is yours.

FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS OF ONTARIO

Mrs M. Schroder: I will introduce myself and I will introduce the people with me. My name is Martha Schroder. On my right is Angela Smith. She is the principal of our elementary school, St Clement Catholic school in Etobicoke, and on my left is my hubby, Gunter Schroder. We are all directors with the Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario.

The Chair: Excellent. Thank you.

Mr Keyes: That explains the spelling error in the agenda today. I wondered if we had two people so close in their name but with a slightly different spelling.

Mrs M. Schroder: It is close.

The Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario, which is a group of active Catholic parent-teacher associations across the province, is pleased to have this opportunity to address the select committee of the Legislature.

As parents of children attending Catholic schools throughout the province, we have a deep personal commitment to offer every child in this province the best education possible. This ongoing commitment requires that we, as primary educators of our children, examine, review and, if necessary, revise the parameters of our educational system to meet the challenges of a changing society. In order to meet the challenges of our changing society, ongoing lifetime education will continue to have a major and dynamic influence on this society.

It is most appropriate that the first area of education to be examined by this select committee of the Legislature should be early primary education. The FCPTAO takes the position that early primary education is the cornerstone on which the child will build all future educational experiences. These early years are most important. They are the years upon which all higher learning finds true meaning.

Robert Fulghum, in his book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, sums up early childhood education experience.

"Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school."

As we approach the year 2000 and reflect on early childhood education, we parents, educators and those involved in community services are challenged to discern the needs of our very young children and how we might best meet these needs. We must examine the background of early childhood education, the resources now available and the environment in our homes, schools and communities. We must take a hard and fast look at the attitude of the general public towards spending educational dollars on the greatest investment, the education of our young children.

Mr G. Schroder: The examination of the background: In 1975, Ministry of Education curriculum documents, *The Formative Years* and *Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions*, set out the philosophy and goals of the ministry in early primary education. These documents emphasized child-centred learning which recognized the individuality of learning styles, the need for the young child to develop self-confidence through success and the importance of play in the cognitive learning processes of the child. This holistic approach recognized that each child must be given the freedom and opportunity to reach her or his stature spiritually, socially, psychologically, physically, emotionally and academically.

Likewise, professional educators, through the four Ontario teachers' federations, recognized the importance of the early years and initiated their study in 1977 by Laurier La Pierre. His document, *To Herald A Child*, supported the Ministry of Education's initiatives in early primary education and urged increased attention and resources be directed to education at this level.

Indeed, the Ministry of Education extended its role and commitment to early childhood education when it announced via the throne speech in May of last year that starting in September of this year, all school boards in Ontario would offer half-day junior and senior kindergarten.

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The importance of positive and stimulating environments for young children has been well documented. Parents and professional educators are now more aware of the crucial importance of the early experience and development from two to eight years to the intellectual and social growth of the child.

Many research studies support this view. For example, Dr David Weikart, of the High/Scope Education Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan, told the Ministry of Education's early primary education project in June 1984 that children who have received good early education had fewer learning difficulties, lower delinquency rates in later life and much higher productivity, self-sufficiency, employability and positive participation in economic life than those who did not.

Dr Weikart's research findings support the conclusions reached in the headstart programs initiated by US President Johnson in 1965. In general, the project found the early education program results promising. Children who had participated in such programs scored about 10 points higher on the Stanford-Binet or Wechsler intelligence scale for children tests on entering school and tended to be more self-confident and socially competent than children who have not received special attention.

Follow-up studies indicated that early education programs produce some lasting academic results and social benefits, as were stated by Dr Weikart. Headstart programs have shown that the specific method used appears to be less important than parental involvement, and we stress parental involvement. Programs that actively involve the parents—that is, interest them in their child's development and show them how to provide a more stimulating home environment—tend to produce the greatest results.

Challenges for the present and the future: It is and will continue to be a challenge to make society as a whole, including parents, educational officials and the general public, recognize early childhood education as a legitimate learning experience that not only serves the child's best interests but the interests of the whole of society.

Too often this learning experience is viewed by the general public, and indeed by some parents, as a baby-sitting service. There is a need to make the general public aware of the many benefits of early childhood education. The benefits to the child and his or her family and to the common good of society must be emphasized and publicized.

As primary and professional educators, we share responsibility for ensuring that society views its collective responsibility to provide early primary education to all children. Primary education must be seen as being academically proactive and not reactive to child care or baby-sitting needs.

Mrs M. Schroder: "Education in the future will require a greater public involvement, a greater partnership between home and school, between the community and the school.... The school cannot be indifferent to the social conditions of the area it serves."

This commitment to partnership in education is as true today as in the 1968 Hall-Dennis report, *Living and Learning*. In an increasingly complex world, the need for co-ordinated partnership between the home, the school and, in the Catholic school system, the church has never been greater.

We say we are a school system with a difference. This triad partnership of home, school and church is the essence of this difference. Our religious program is an integral part of the day's happening. In the faith-sharing of parents and teachers, the children come to know their God through the gifts of creation and the love which is shared in the community of family, church and school. The Catholic school system supports the holistic approach to educating the child academically, socially and spiritually. Only by working co-operatively and collectively can all the partners provide the necessary components and services to ensure the growth and development of the child into a contributing and productive member of society.

The Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario remains committed to the principle that parents are the child's primary educators. We recognize that the child has many educators, including parents, care givers, the school and the community. Parents remain the first and primary educators in a child's life.

It is parents who are responsible for not only giving life but for the gentle caring and nurturing in early years. It is parents who teach the first basic lessons of living in community, the community of the family. From the parents, the child discovers his or her self-worth and God-given dignity.

The Ministry of Education has long recognized and supported the family in this role.

"Today we know that what our grandparents sensed was right; a stable, healthy family life and strong community ties are crucial to the growing child and, ultimately, to the wellbeing of society."

That is from the Report of the Early Primary Education Project, Ministry of Education, 1985.

Mr G. Schroder: Child care in the schools: Certainly the family structure itself has undergone radical change over the past generation. The familiar 1950s family with wage-earner

father and the non-wage-earner homemaker mother has been superseded by a variety of family modes, including two-parent working families and single-parent families. This is reflected in Statistics Canada March 1988 statistics, which showed that 67 per cent of women in the labour force have children in the three- to five-year age group. Because of these changing family structures, economic need and the new expectations concerning work, there have been increasing demands for child care outside the home.

In the spring of 1987, the government of Ontario announced plans to greatly expand the provision of child care. At this time, one of the strategies undertaken was a partnership of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services to encourage school boards to play a key role by providing space and participating in local planning and co-ordination of child care services in all new schools and in existing schools where space allowed.

The school's primary function is academic education. The Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations of Ontario believes that child care is not a function of the educational system. In response to community needs, school space, where available, should be given for child care, which includes day care and pre- and after-school care, but this should be administered by nonprofit community agencies or recreational agencies at the local level.

I must add at this point that we live in Etobicoke. In Etobicoke we have a community school program that is very active and we have programs that involve the community right from birth to death. Child care is involved here, and this is the whole idea that we are trying to expand on. That should be throughout the province.

The co-ordination of child care programs in schools is problematic in several areas, and the issue is too encompassing to be discussed in this brief. Suffice it to say that despite the announcement of a number of provincial initiatives and the rapid growth in the number of licensed child care centres in schools, very little information is available on a number of fundamental questions concerning the role of school boards in the provision of child care.

Among these questions is the issue of conflicting legislative demands in the Education Act and the Day Nurseries Act. These two pieces of legislation have different requirements for the same age groups.

Under the Day Nurseries Act, school boards cannot be licensed to directly operate child care programs. This raises the question as to whether school boards should be licensed to be directly involved in child care programs. It also raises the question of financing and which of the two ministries is responsible for funding and administering the programs.

We have previously stated that a school's primary function is academic education. The lines of responsibility for child care and education must remain clearly defined.

The Ministry of the Child: If in fact our society regards our children as part of its greatest natural resource, then more than lipservice must be paid to the importance to society of children. A Ministry of the Child is needed to advocate and provide government policy direction. This ministry would assist school boards, community agencies and other social institutions that have responsibility for the care, development and education of a child. Its most important mandate would be to assist parents in their responsibilities in the educational process of the child and help parents access available agencies and facilities to support them in this role.

Mrs M. Schroder: It is important that our teachers be given the opportunity and be recognized as specialist educators of young children. All primary teachers should be early childhood specialists who have received high-quality pre-service and in-service training in early primary education.

Our increasingly complex environment makes it critical for teachers to identify and respond to forces of social, cultural and technical change. It is imperative that our schools and education systems, which include and emphasize the teacher's abilities to keep pace with change, be recognized and that proper support be given to school boards to institute in-service and pre-service education of their primary teachers.

The FCPTAO remains committed to the principle that the parent is the prime educator of the child within the framework of partnership of home, school and church. We must repeat and emphasize that early primary education is the cornerstone on which the child will build all future educational experiences. These early years are most important. They are the years upon which all higher learning finds true meaning.

On behalf of the Catholic parents and educators of this province, we thank you for this opportunity to speak to you this morning.

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The Chair: I thank you very much. We appreciate it. I have had three requests for questions and I am sure there will be others. Mr Johnston, Mr Neumann and Mr Keyes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Thank you to the Schroders for your presentation. I guess I like almost all that I hear as you read it. But there are a couple of things that are not just restrictive things. You have said what others have said and I have not been able to get at them all. So I am going to ask you questions and try to be a little more personal, precisely on line.

The first one is that you make a very clear distinction between the roles of school and child care, which I have real difficulty making in the sense that my notion of a school is not that it is just a place for academics at all. In fact, the socialization, the social development, of children has as important a role as the learning of math or whatever in critical thought. That kind of notion rather than academic thought, if I could make that distinction as well, is an important role of the school.

Then I look at the early childhood educators and what they are doing and I see that is a real educational environment they are talking about. They are doing the same kind of creative play things with kids to get them to work together. They are teaching them, in the early years especially, to learn the same kind of discipline that others are learning.

I do not understand how we can still talk about these as such distinct kinds of units and, therefore, the one should be at Community and Social Services and the other in Education, especially if the premise of what you are saying about the importance of these years in terms of a coherent base for these kids to develop in, especially within your philosophy—a combination of family, church and school is holistic. I do not understand how we can have this separation that you are talking about in terms of the ministries, etc.

Then, of course, you do suggest a Ministry of the Child, but it seems to go counter to that. Can I have your response to why you separate it out so clearly?

Mrs M. Schroder: Essentially it has to do with finances. For example, in our particular ward, about 80 per cent of the ratepayers do not have children in the separate school system, but they continue to support it. What I think the government has done is foisted the responsibility of child care on to the ratepayer. People then come to resent the fact that the schools are being

used for what they do not see as an educational experience. So we have this problem.

I cannot speak for schools other than the schools in our own area. We are bursting at the seams. Every school that I have been in, in our family of schools, has portables. We do not have the space to educate our children, let alone to provide adequate day care facilities for children, and there is the resentment of parents who see day care going into schools and then their children being forced out of the main school building.

So what it really gets down to is not a philosophical distinction, but rather a financial distinction.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Well, I can buy the financial totally. I see the philosophical rationalization for it, which is in your document, but I worry about that because it plays into the hands of others. The fact that there needs to be a recognition—

Mrs M. Schroder: Yes. We realized after it had been written. You have got to appreciate that none of us—Angela is a professional educator, but Gunter and I are parents. That is our role. I am a nurse and he is a police officer. We do not have professional educators' experience. The three of us helped to make this brief. We realized when we got up here that some of what we have said is not as clear as it possibly could be. If we were professionals instead of volunteers and had a lot of background in doing this, perhaps we would make—

Mr R. F. Johnston: I had better share with you some of the other documents that are here. Yours stacks up very well with some of the others we have received, believe me.

The Chair: You do not have to apologize at all. It is an excellent brief and that is why the questions.

Mrs M. Schroder: But I agree. That part of it particularly gave us all a great deal of difficulty. People do not see the legitimacy of early childhood education. A lot of the people we meet at church, the ratepayers, see JK and SK as—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Child care.

Mrs M. Schroder: Not even child care; baby-sitting. If they saw it as child care, perhaps we could justify it to them, but they see it as a baby-sitting experience. It is very difficult at our level, which is a person-to-person community level, to get across that theory. They say to us, "Well, they don't do anything," and you think, "Oh"—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Sorry. You wanted to add something here?

Miss Smith: I was going to say, with regard to this word "academic," I think it is probably misunderstood. I think probably what we have all discussed is that we are thinking more of coming under the umbrella of a ministry and a structured curriculum or whatever. Certainly it means also this total socialization process which is ongoing—excuse me, I have just had dental surgery, so I am—

Mr R. F. Johnston: No problem. You are very easily understood.

We could talk about this for a long time in terms of the chicken and eggs involved in the problems of how people perceive the systems at the moment. I think the irony is, of course, that the child care system has evolved in a way which is now very pedagogically connected to the developmental philosophies that are in kindergarten at the moment and, in some ways, that system has a better capacity to deal with that pedagogy because of the class size in comparison with what you find in kindergartens and in the primary division as a whole.

That is a great irony. At some advanced day cares these days, you can get as good or better education than you can in a large kindergarten at this age, where there are not the resources necessarily put in it by the individual boards. So we do have to deal with those perceptions, and that is what my next question is about.

Again, this is not posed to you just because of what you have asserted. The things you have talked about are things we have had from others and I have not always had the chance to ask these questions. But one that has been forming in the back of my mind—it has only just come to fruition this morning—is that we are all talking about the importance of the sector of education. To get the basis in, it is really crucial that we put emphasis on it and money in there and in training teachers, etc. But we then say that until grade 6 it is not mandatory for a child to be in the system.

Mrs M. Schroder: Age six.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Age six. What did I say?

Mrs M. Schroder: Grade 6. None of them would be in school.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is right, age six. Sorry. At age six you have to enter the system. But everything we are saying is that, if we want to help kids deal with the modern society, they must get the kind of stimulation we are talking about here early on, and we have to put emphasis on the JK and SK, integrating it in some ways

with the other support systems, the seamless day concepts, all of those things that have been talked about.

Yet nobody is talking about why we are sticking with age six as the time still when we are saying mandatory schooling starts. Perhaps at the end of the century, we should be looking at moving it down at least to five. I wonder if your associations talked about that. It is interesting that nobody has really picked on that of those we have heard from, even though everybody has had the same kind of language about the importance of this time. Everybody has accepted the fact that it should be a parental choice still at five—or is it six? Now the state says, “You have your childhood.”

Mrs M. Schroder: It would be interesting to see how many children actually wait until age six to enter the school system. I do not think many parents leave that as an option. I think most people—

Mr R. F. Johnston: No. It looks like 80 per cent of the children are now in. I may have the figure wrong.

Mrs M. Schroder: Then it is an educational problem to make parents aware of what actually early childhood education does to benefit their child and them.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Has your organization talked at all about whether we should change the notion of mandatory schooling or has it sort of left that, as everybody else seems to have?

Mrs M. Schroder: Yes. I think we have left it. We have talked about early childhood education, but I do not think about the fact that it is not mandatory to send your child to school until age six. It would be interesting to bring it up and to see what the consensus is among our directors.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Again, I think it runs totally contrary. The moves and the kind of discussion we are having, and maybe looking at five, runs contrary to a lot of the public perception about the value and the role of that kind of education. Maybe one of the means of changing their attitudes is to say, “We think this is so important that every child should be in that system with this kind of a curriculum, this kind of training for teachers,” the sort of things we have been hearing. But the bottom line, to get people to accept that that is important, is to say, “SK is as important as grade 1 in terms of the development of your child.”

Mrs M. Schroder: The real school in grade 1.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Yes. Exactly.

Miss Smith: I think perhaps too we should take a look at the whole grading at the primary level. Maybe there is too much emphasis put on, “This is grade 1 and this is grade 2 and grade 3,” having it more as a developmental approach.

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Mr R. F. Johnston: We have taken that line in past reports and I am sure we will be re-emphasizing the notion of looking at the division in a much, much less sort of strict ways by grade, but rather in terms of a holistic view of the child's development during that period. Thank you very much. Sorry. I should not throw it on you. It is something I have been throwing on to trustees and others who have been coming as well.

Mr Neumann: Richard has asked some of the questions I wanted to ask, but I will pursue one element, and that is on page 9 where you talk about the responsibility for child care and education remaining clearly defined. We did have presentations from some groups in which they said that this definition which exists in schools, where child care centres already exist within the school the parents found it confusing to have the kids in the morning in the day care centre and in the afternoon in the kindergarten. They did not understand the difference, having to do fund-raising here and not do fund-raising there, different ratios of adults to children and so on.

Some people have recommended that we make the division at age four and that the Ministry of Community and Social Services be responsible for day care below age four and the school system be responsible from, actually, age 3.8, as they put it, onwards and that there be a division on an age basis. Any reaction to that?

Mrs M. Schroder: We would have to look at that whole question, but the fact is there has to be that clear definition. It has to be clear to people what their child is actually in. As you were saying, half a day in day care and half in day in JK or SK, which are doing essentially the same program, is really confusing for the average parent. So there has to be some kind of definition that we all understand, a starting point that we all start from, so that we know how we are educating this child or how we are looking after this child.

Mr Neumann: I was not too surprised but really pleased that some of your presentation mentioned the importance of the role of parents and how important the motivation of the parents and having an interest in their children's welfare are for the child's future. Do you think that we do

enough to support parents who are involved in the process of identifying proper placement for children with special needs? Do you think we do enough in that area?

Mrs M. Schroder: I think parents really have to be supported in the sense of children with special needs because there is that whole area of parental guilt, if we can call it that. There needs to be that real support for a parent. I think in our educational system there has been a great deal of support for parents who have children with special needs, not only for the child but taking that holistic approach of treating the whole family. I think that is really important in the whole educational process.

Miss Smith: I think this is where it is so very, very important that you have parents, teachers and administrators working together on this. I heard in a previous presentation here the question of IPRCs and I think parents are very frightened when they hear this initially. This is where I think parents have to be brought into the school and made part of the whole decision-making that is going on regarding their child, and then they are comfortable with it. We all are afraid of the unknown and if we have not been involved in the process, we question it.

Mr R. F. Johnston: —the intimidation, even of those parents who are involved in the IPRC process, where you walk into a room and there is a whole room full of professionals who have usually already met in advance and have come up with their board-based decision. There is the parent alone, often without an advocate, not even knowing about the various parent and self-help groups, etc, which are out there to link into and that they have a right to have an advocate with them.

We talked about a notion back when the legislation was first brought in and it was not picked up, the idea of having advocates, and whether it becomes a formalized kind of thing like the worker adviser at the Workers' Compensation Board or something which is a part of somebody's job in the school. If that person can be separated enough from the connections to the school's decision on this, and that is another matter, but something to reinforce the parent in that kind of situation, from my experience, is really crucial.

Mr Neumann: I think we saw here how you reacted defensively to some of our questions. I think it is a natural reaction of parents and they say, "Well, I don't have the professional training" or "Who am I to question this recommendation?"

Having gone through the experience myself as a parent—both my wife and I went through the IPRC process for one of our children—I know how to lobby, I know who to talk to. I am a professional educator myself, and yet I felt some intimidation in facing the people around the table, talking about the future of my child. Should I sign it right there or go home and think about it?

I put myself in the position of a single-parent mom, with perhaps very little education, who is intimidated by officials all the time. What support do they have in going through the process? I am wondering whether your association has looked at that particular problem.

Mrs M. Schroder: We have looked at the problem of the fact that most of us were raised in a totally different school system where, really, the only times our parents ever went to school was for interview night, and it better have been a good report or you heard about it when they came home. Essentially, in a lot of ways, that was the only time that a parent was in the school.

We all draw on our past experiences, so we draw on that sort of adversarial or confrontational sort of meeting with a teacher. Somebody said to me, "You don't normally make an appointment to see the teacher when you have something good to say." So both of you are anxious, because both of you know that you are coming because there is a problem. Immediately you are both on the defensive.

We have discussed that whole question and how best to get parents involved in the school system and to make them comfortable with a school system which is so different from the one most of us were raised in.

Mr Keyes: I will just basically comment, and it really started off with Richard reiterating it, because I think it came out very glaringly when you talked about the lines of responsibility between child care and education that were not clearly defined. That becomes the real concern, that that is probably the most difficult thing to do.

Again, I question whether that is appropriate or not. We have heard from so many presentations this week, particularly about the new buzzword, "seamless" day for children. If you have not got it, put that in your vocabulary, because that is the thing today.

Mr R. F. Johnston: No zippers.

Mr Keyes: No zippers or anything else; they are seamless days.

The idea is that there should be such continuity for the child who comes in, whether it is in the child care concept within the school and through

JK and SK, that it becomes very difficult to try to do that definition you are looking for. I think perhaps it sounded as though you said it should be clearly defined—

Mrs M. Schroder: Financially.

Mr Keyes: —more because you were concerned about the finances of it, rather than the philosophy and the pedagogy connected with it.

I think perhaps we have to say: "Let's recognize there is a horrendous financial commitment and responsibility there and let's maybe set that aside at the moment. It has to be addressed, but let's look more philosophically as to what is in the best interests of the child." We should try to blend them together. I think that is the direction we are more apt to be heading in.

It is a great challenge, the training of teachers who have worked with primary children versus the type of training that currently happens with the early childhood educating of workers. There is a conflict there, most definitely. We will have to see how we can smooth that transition and keep them basically on a more equal status as far as dealing with the young child is concerned, because there is certainly a distinction between those people who teach early childhood education and look after child care work and those who are in the primary division of schools. We heard some of those examples this week as well.

I want to come back a bit. There is no doubt also about the potential changes as determined on tests. Having been a teacher for some time as well, when you look at the headstart programs and they say, "The Stanford-Binet and the WISC tests produced great results," of course they do, because the tests are so designed to measure what the children were subjected to in the headstart program. so they always looked good for the persons who developed the tests, etc, and what you wanted to see—

Mr Neumann: It proves that the money was well spent.

Mr Keyes: It proves it was well spent, and as Dave and I were discussing, probably one of the other things that happened in headstart programs—you put it so well. You said the most important factor in the headstart programs was parental involvement.

In headstart programs, many of the children who went into headstart programs were usually from families where the parents supported and made sure they had that support to get them into the headstart program and the other groups were those who perhaps did not. So one of the major components was getting the child involved to begin with, which became more important. So

while the tests gave great, glowing results, you have to be somewhat sceptical about them. They will measure what the child has been subjected to.

Going back—I cut you off earlier—

Mr Neumann: It is a good question.

Mr Keyes: I said I was not going to ask a question, I was going to make a statement.

Mrs M. Schroder: I am the federation's representative on this child care advisory committee, and I was not aware of any of the delineations, the qualifications of an early childhood educator versus a primary teacher specialist, until I got involved in that and they sent me about 40 pounds of reading material to see. I do not think parents are aware of the training that early childhood education people have versus what a primary school teacher specialist has. It is only because I had to do the research to be on this committee that I was made aware of it.

Mr Keyes: We have become aware of it too, because we have visited, we have now looked and been able to read at some length.

Just as a comment to Richard, who is hung up on the age for compulsory education, I would think we are going to see the time when we will just omit that from our regulations, because it creates more of a problem.

All you have to do is look at this morning, when we listened to the last presenters. All but two boards in the separate school system already have JK and SK, so making it available has been taken advantage of by the majority of the population.

Rather than just getting down to having to have that age, I think it will eventually disappear. As we provide the meaningful and appropriate types of facilities and continuum of education, the highest percentage of our students will be involved with them.

In order to protect ourselves, we may still want to provide for the fact that if parents are not bringing their child into that system somewhere, we have to allow them, as we do nowadays, to have their at-home education, but we have to assure ourselves—

Mr R. F. Johnston: But before you can make the presumption that all you need is the program in place and permissiveness, you need to know who is not participating.

Mr Keyes: Yes.

Mr R. F. Johnston: If you are finding that it is a socioeconomic group that is not participating, then you have no choice, it seems to me. If it is

say a lower economic group that somehow does not take part in this, that means the gap in their education is going to be even greater than it has been traditionally and therefore you may have no choice then but to go the mandatory route.

I do not think we have an idea yet. One of the things it would be interesting to try to find out—and I think it would take a separate study altogether—would be who does not use it in places where it is provided. It would be really interesting to know that. I do not think anybody knows at this stage.

The Chair: Just a couple of points for clarification. You said that 80 per cent of your ratepayers in your board—

Mrs M. Schroder: No, not in our board, in our particular ward.

The Chair: I see, okay.

Mrs M. Schroder: Just in our ward. The only reason I know that is that our trustee, last Sunday or the Sunday before at mass, had information sheets about some of the work that she did, which is really interesting, because when Gunter and I started Adele in the school system, we really did not have a clear understanding of what all these people did, what trustees did and whom they were responsible to. We know we went out and voted for these people, but exactly what they did was kind of fuzzy. She puts out an information sheet.

I believe they have renumbered all the wards. It used to be wards 1 and 2, but I think it is ward 9 now in Etobicoke. I will not swear to it. Of the ratepayers in our particular ward who are separate school supporters, 80 per cent do not have children right now in the separate school system. Certainly Gunter and I were that way for almost 11 years. We did not have a child in the separate school system but we paid separate school taxes.

The Chair: Just to clarify, it is either younger families who have not started a family yet or older people who have gone through the system. You have the two ranges. That is good, because that is the first time we have heard kind of anecdotal demographics of how those things are going.

I thank you very much for your presentation. I appreciate your comments.

Before we adjourn for lunch, I draw your attention to something that Yvonne arranged for us to get, and that is the Garderie scolaire d'Ottawa-Carleton School Day Nursery Inc. They presented a letter to us and a short brief.

Mrs O'Neill: The document that is referred to in this letter is a document that the ministry presented to us.

The Chair: Right.

Mrs O'Neill: I just thought you would like to see how this group—

Mr R. F. Johnston: Actually, I think it is something you might be interested in getting hold of some day, given this whole notion of how you bring the two things together, because they have developed a number of models for how you mix the ECE and family specialist in potential kindergarten and child care days. It has been published in the Ottawa-Carleton board. If you would like a copy of it, I am sure we can make one for you and have it sent to you.

The Chair: The second thing is, I would just remind you we are making extra copies, if you made so many notes that you cannot read your outline for this afternoon. The homework assignment, of course, is that we are staying after school today at four o'clock to start dealing with that. I would appreciate your gathering your thoughts over lunchtime, as well as the thoughts you had last night, and put them all together for our discussions.

The committee recessed at 1155.

AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1410 in committee room 1.

The Chair: I call the meeting to order. We have the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation: Bill Martin, Gene Lewis and Dave Lennox. Gentlemen, I will turn it over to you. If there are any other things you want to say by way of introduction, please feel free.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Mr Martin: My name is Bill Martin, president of the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation. To my right is Gene Lewis, first vice-president, and to my left is the general secretary, David Lennox.

The federation welcomes the opportunity to present this submission to the legislative select committee on education and congratulates you for addressing the important topic of early childhood education. It was always our dream that this would get air time during the select committee hearings and we are very pleased that it is getting air time at this particular point in time.

Primary education is the foundation of the educational system. If children do not have a firm base to build from, the educational system is likely to tumble. Too often primary education is dismissed as a baby-sitting service. The challenge is to convince legislators that the one third of Ontario's students who are registered in junior and senior kindergarten programs and grades 1, 2 and 3 deserve extensive attention and financial support and are of equal importance as students in the higher grades.

The OPSTF urges the select committee to acknowledge the young child as an important learner. Recommendations to the government must clearly recognize the value of the young child in our society and the value of early childhood education. Let's not put the needs and priorities of adults ahead of what we know is good for young children.

Let's look at the realities because education has certainly changed over the past number of years. Educational practice is influenced by economic, political and social considerations. This is particularly notable at the present time. Concern for fuelling the labour market of the future has focused educators, politicians, business and industry on a need to reform or restructure our educational system. The federa-

tion recognizes the importance of preparing young people for the world of work and for further education. Yet there is a nagging suspicion that such reforms are not focusing on the needs of children but rather on the unknown labour market. Unless we start by meeting the needs of children, any efforts to improve education, and ultimately the labour market, are doomed to failure.

A description of our rapidly changing society is not required here, although the effects on young children must be examined. Widespread poverty in Ontario cannot be ignored. Young children arrive at the schoolroom door hungry, cold and often lacking in love, affection and understanding. The increasing cultural diversity of our society translates into a formidable task to ensure that young children are at home in our schools. Television, video and video games have increased children's knowledge of our world. Lack of attention and consistency in child rearing has resulted in increased behavioural problems.

The agenda of the government must be scrutinized to ensure policies are developed to meet the changing needs of children and their families. The federation takes the position that children have a right to quality child care and quality education. The government must recognize that priorities may need to be changed in order to afford children and their families the support required to ensure that no one is deprived in his early years, which leads us to our first recommendation:

1. That the government of Ontario strike a new agenda and set as its priority the needs of young children and their families.

The issue of child abuse: There are many kinds of abuse; physical, sexual and emotional abuse of young children are all too common in our complicated society. Often the school is the only haven from abuse for young children. Many of us remember the strap. I find it odd that when we think in terms of abuse, corporal punishment is still a practice in some schools within the province of Ontario. This leads us to our second recommendation, which would mean a change to regulation 262:

2. That the Ministry of Education develop a policy stating that corporal punishment is unacceptable as a means of discipline in the schools of Ontario.

Role models: Teachers are powerful role models for young children. The federation is

supportive of programs to ensure equal opportunity for appointment without discrimination to positions of responsibility. It is an action that we felt was overdue and we are pleased the government is moving in that direction.

But this federation is also on record as expressing concern about the number of male teachers entering the teaching profession. Currently, at the primary division level we have ratios of nine to one of females to males graduating out of faculties of education. We believe it is essential, particularly in a society where a majority of single-parent families are headed by women, for young children to have the opportunity to relate to male role models. Too often, children do not have a male teacher until late in their elementary schooling.

Equally troublesome is the lack of teachers representing different races and cultural backgrounds. With increased numbers of immigrants and refugees coming to Ontario, this issue must be resolved. This leads us to:

3. That the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities implement a public relations program encouraging young people to choose teaching in the primary division as a career and that the target audience be men, members of minority groups and aboriginal people.

4. That the Teacher Education Council of Ontario be requested to study the issue of enrolment of males, minority groups and aboriginal peoples at the faculties of education and prepare an action plan to remedy the situation.

Before I go on, we do not want to hear about the circular argument in this issue. When the government wanted to address affirmative action, you took the bull by the horns and addressed it by setting quotas. We expect the government has to set this as a priority as well. Otherwise it will continually be passed on to another authority and nothing will take place in the future.

On page 4 we refer to the partnership that must exist between the parents and the teachers in the educational field. It is the responsibility of parents to actively participate in their children's education. Parents and teachers must work together and teachers must be responsible for offering opportunities for parents to participate in the school.

In today's society, most families have both parents working. New and flexible methods of building a communication link between parents and teachers must be found. Having been a teacher now for 20 years and seeing the changes,

especially in a grade 5 class, I can certainly agree with the following statements:

5. That faculties of education and school boards develop in-service courses to assist teachers to establish mutually supportive relationships with parents. A comfort level has to be established.

6. That the Ministry of Education encourage parents to be active participants in the provision of educational programs through involvement in parent advisory committees, home and school associations, parent-teacher associations and similar organizations. The position of this federation is that we urge all schools to have home and school associations within their buildings;

7. This is where the ministry can do something. That the Ministry of Education develop a series of public service announcements in many languages, to be aired on prime-time television, which inform parents of their responsibility and to encourage them to become actively involved in their children's education. The ministry has done it in the area of AIDS; it has done it in the area of drugs; we believe it is time to do it in the area of education.

8. That the Ministry of Labour make provision in law for parents to be released from work without loss of salary to attend school activities in which their child is involved.

As a classroom teacher, I have too often had the child come to me and state, "My parents would like to be here, but they're working and they can't get time off." We believe it is important that the parents see their child in the work setting of the school, whether it be for a play or to observe him in the classroom. The Ministry of Labour could produce that law to allow parents the opportunity to bring this about.

9. That the Ministry of Education actively support adjustments in the schoolday or school week to ensure that parents and teachers can meet to discuss the child's progress. Many boards of education across the province have gone into flexible hours for interviewing time. Continual contact with the parents is necessary to be able to discuss the progress of each child in the school.

The school program: As the government and school boards and the federation develop a system of education for the 21st century, traditional ideas about what is taught, how it is taught and how to measure children's learning must be re-examined. Basic skills in communication and computation have been, and will certainly continue to be, the foundation of student learning and growth. In the educational

system today, we have moved to activity-based learning. We have developed individual programs for the children within the classroom. Teachers now act as facilitators more than as teachers. Such an environment cannot be achieved if the classrooms are overcrowded with students.

1420

I applaud the government for its funding in grades 1 and 2, but now that this is almost implemented it is time to take that next step, which would lead us to:

10. That the Ministry of Education mandate maximum class size in junior and senior kindergarten be 16 pupils and in grades 1, 2 and 3 be 20 pupils.

"Back to the basics" is the term that we have constantly had to deal with in the newspapers over the course of our careers. The Ministry of Education has, in its various policy and support documents, clearly enunciated a policy which promotes a program for young children that will ensure a joyful, stimulating learning environment. Teachers need to be reassured that the policy of the Ministry of Education is the acceptable mode of learning. The community, the public, business and industry must learn about educating the young child. If the education system concedes to the "back to the basics" movement, which hopefully we would never do, our aspirations for improvement to the Ontario educational system will definitely end in tragedy.

This leads us to resources, because in order to provide the program we must also be able to provide the resources. One of the most important resources to be provided any young child is access to the school resource centre. In the elementary panels, however, it is the hub of the school, particularly with activity-based learning. Children go off to the resource centre to do individualized projects and learning activities. Therefore we recommend:

11. That the Ministry of Education require school boards to provide adequate resource centre facilities, resources and services in each elementary school.

It is a shame when you go into a school and you find out that the resource centre is closed for the day because the teacher in the resource centre is teaching at the next school down the road, because that is the only way they can service their resource centres.

12. That the Ministry of Education require school boards to assign a teacher librarian to each elementary school is the only way in order to be able to solve that problem.

Not this government but a previous government produced a document known as Partners in Action. It was always made as a suggestion and never a recommendation. Perhaps Partners in Action as a form of the use of the library should be implemented at this particular time.

The last time we met with the select committee we voiced our concerns regarding the financing of education. I would draw your attention to what is probably the key motion we left with you, a recommendation out of our last meeting:

13. That the Ministry of Education ensure that the funding formula recognizes the actual cost of educating the young child.

Recommendation 3 out of your last report suggested that a group of people get together, the main stakeholders in education, and deal with finding out the true costs of education. We want to be part of that group. We are still waiting for the phone call from Queen's Park to state that this group will in fact be put in place. Hopefully, we will not have to wait much longer.

14. That the Ministry of Education ensure that equal opportunity, encouragement and instruction in the use of computers and technological advances are provided to all pupils regardless of place of residence, age or special needs.

I think the "regardless of place of residence" is extremely important. If we look in the city of Toronto, for example, if you are doing a fund-raising activity up in Forest Hill, chances are you are going to make a little bit more money there than you are going to get in the main core of Toronto, which also means that the equipment those people could buy through fund-raising activities would probably be far more beneficial to the students within that school.

I also must state that we are on record as an organization that we believe that classes should not have to do fund-raising activities but that it should be the responsibility of the government to provide those services.

Early and ongoing identification of children's learning needs: The ministry requires each school board to establish early and ongoing procedures to identify children's strengths and needs and to assist in providing appropriate programs. The federation is concerned that not all school boards understand the concept of early and ongoing identification of children's learning needs, which leads us to:

15. That school boards review their early and ongoing assessment procedures to ensure the program is consistent with Ministry of Education policy.

16. That the Ministry of Education recognize that the teacher's observation is the primary approach to assessment.

When we think in terms of observation of the young child by using checklists, we find in a classroom far more growth and far more accurate observation and evaluation as a method as we go through the process. It is like the principal walking up and down the halls of a school. He knows what classrooms are busy and which ones are not. He does not have to go in and observe and write scads of paper on an individual teacher. He or she will know just by walking past the door.

There has to be some communication between the day care and nursery school. Education is continuous and we have to have records between the day care and nursery school as far as personnel and materials are concerned.

17. That the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services develop a process which will encourage and mandate communication between day care/nursery school personnel and schools.

There is no place in the school system for province-wide standardized tests for young children. It has been a position of this government for many years. Evaluation of a young child's progress must be ongoing and based on the child's strengths rather than weaknesses. Incorrect expectations, such as that every child will read at age 6, must be rejected.

In-depth records must be kept recording the child's academic, social, emotional and physical progress. Parents must be kept informed of what the child can do and what areas require additional attention. Parents should be enlisted to promote the child's strengths and help overcome problem areas.

We must have clear, significant, appropriate and achievable expectations for children and provide the resources to meet those expectations. Therefore, the federation has three recommendations in this area.

18. That the Ministry of Education adopt the policy that the educational growth of the young child be evaluated on the basis of individual, continuous growth.

19. That the Ministry of Education and school boards ensure that young children are not subjected to province-wide standardized testing.

20. That the Ministry of Education enunciate clear, appropriate and achievable expectations for children in the primary grades and provide the resources to meet those expectations. I think this is the key.

One child may achieve the expectations before another one, but that is just a simple case of growth. Everyone should probably be at a specific level at the end of grade 3, but to get from point A to point B it is going to take each child a different rate.

At one time, elementary schools had a school nurse onsite on a regular basis. The Ministry of Health and school boards have severely limited this service, however, as a result of recent cutbacks. We believe it is time to re-evaluate the role of the school nurse and her or his contribution in the school and to the wellbeing of the young child. Therefore, the federation recommends:

21. That the Ministry of Health provide adequate funds to ensure that a public health nurse is onsite in elementary schools on an ongoing basis and that time allotted is proportionate to the number of students enrolled in the school.

22. That school boards ensure that public health personnel are integral members of school staff.

Exceptional children: In every school there are a number of exceptional children identified by an identification and placement review committee. Professionals have an increasing knowledge about exceptionalities and more young children are being identified as being exceptional. Many school boards integrate exceptional children into regular classrooms. The federation is supportive of this trend, but is concerned with the ability of the school boards in order to be able to respond. Therefore, the federation recommends:

23. That the Ministry of Education and the school boards ensure that exceptional pupils are integrated into regular schools in the most enabling environment. That may mean that a teacher or a student will not be able to be in a regular-stream class. It may mean that they are in a segregated class. Whatever is best for the child is the way that we should be moving.

24. That the Ministry of Education be responsible for allocation of additional funding beyond current levels to allow for the complete implementation of Ministry of Education recommended policies and programs for exceptional children.

We do not accept what was done last year in the financing of education when we folded special education grants into the general legislative grant. That makes it too easy for a board not to be able to use that money and also use it as an excuse that it cannot provide the special educational service that is required within a board of

education. We would recommend that this grant be moved outside of the GLG and used appropriately by the boards of education.

1430

25. That the Ministry of Education mandate that when an exceptional pupil, identified by the process outlined in the Education Act, is integrated into a classroom program or is withdrawn from an exceptional program for limited placement in a classroom, there be (a) reduced class size for the program, (b) additional funding for the classroom program and (c) additional human resources to support the classroom teacher.

Multiculturalism and race relations: We are pleased with the government initiatives in this area. The success and wellbeing of the school system demands that a child have self-esteem and a strong self-identity and image. Parents of children from different ethnocultural backgrounds must be welcomed and encouraged to participate in their children's education. Children must be comfortable in their schools and know that respect and understanding for every child is the cornerstone of the school system.

One of the most successful programs that I ever ran in a grade 5 history class was when I did not follow the curriculum and I made up my own curriculum, being a multicultural school, and we had a multicultural month. The children shared their experiences from their various cultures, their food, their songs, their art, their history. I am sure that the students probably gained more from that month's experience than they probably ever did by finding out how Marco Polo ended up getting to China.

Therefore, the federation recommends:

26. That the Ministry of Education be responsible for providing the resources, curriculum guidelines and support documents to prepare teachers to work in a multicultural and multi-racial environment. We know Ontario is multicultural, multiracial. We have to have the documents of support.

27. That school boards be responsible for the development and implementation of multiculturalism and race relations policies and procedures. Boards currently are doing this, but the process has been slow, and we believe they should be in every board across the province.

28. That curriculum and teaching strategies which reflect, promote and support a multicultural and multiracial society be implemented in all schools.

The next three deal with our other native languages:

29. That the study of languages, other than English and French, be regarded as a worthwhile pursuit;

30. That a young child be given an opportunity to become fluent in his or her first language;

31. That the study of heritage languages occur outside of the regular instructional day.

32. That multicultural and multiracial education be provided to all students, even if there is not a diverse student enrolment. It is not good enough just to teach this in Metropolitan Toronto and the Windsor areas, we also have to teach it in other areas of the province as well.

33. That school boards offer in-service courses for support personnel such as the school secretaries and custodians to assist them to gain this cultural sensitivity.

Children's working and learning conditions: Changing social conditions have had a great impact on children's working and learning conditions. The federation makes five recommendations in this area:

34. That the government ensure that before- and after-school child care be the norm rather than the exception for every child.

Too often we see children dropped off at the school at seven o'clock in the morning and they huddle outside the door until the caretaker gets the school open and then they stand in the lobby of the school. The parents pick them up at about six o'clock at night. It is unacceptable at this time, and hopefully changes should be able to come about in this area.

35. That school boards provide adequate transportation to and from school for children in the primary grades.

If I am a junior-aged student, why should I not be able to walk further than a primary-aged student? Maybe we have to look specifically for transportation methods for those primary students.

36. That the government provide free and accessible lunchtime care for pupils in publicly funded schools.

37. That the government initiate breakfast and lunch—

[Failure of sound system]

The committee recessed at 1434.

1443

The Chair: Okay, we can reconvene. I realize we may be a little short for a minute or two, because I did say five minutes and by my watch it is about five, so maybe we can proceed. I will keep the questioners on the order roster and you will make up the time. There is no problem; you

will not lose time. You might go back to the point you were just making.

Mr Martin: I think we were on recommendations 36 and 37.

The Chair: Yes, you had dealt with lunchtime care for pupils and you were going into the lobby of your school situation. You might want to start there.

Mr Martin: Just run that by me.

The Chair: You were talking about the caretakers and custodians looking after the kids while they were in the lobby of the school waiting at six o'clock to be picked up by their parents. That is where you were, I think.

Mr Keyes: He went beyond that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: He obviously phased out—

Interjection: The lunchtime care.

Mr Martin: Not the custodians.

36. That the government provide free and accessible lunchtime care for the pupils in publicly funded schools.

37. That the government initiate breakfast and lunch programs for young children.

This is definitely a problem in our schools today, and an increasing problem, of the hungry child coming to the school. This may mean that some students will have to pay, but it will also mean that some of these programs will be provided at no cost to the student.

38. That the Ministry of Education approve plans for new schools that include adequate lunchroom facilities for elementary schools. If we are building these new schools, part of those schools should in fact include lunchroom facilities, even at the junior level. Their needs are just the same as what we find in the high school situations.

The last area I would like to turn to is the Ministry of Education. Recent reorganization of the Ministry of Education worries the federation.

First, work teams to prepare options for the restructuring of education have been appointed. One work team is studying the early years while another focuses on grades 1 through 6. The federation fears that the separation of the early years from grade 1 through grade 6 may fragment the continuous flow of education of the young child.

Our second concern is that the ministry has amalgamated the centre for early childhood and elementary education with the centre for secondary and adult education and named the new branch curriculum policy development. The

federation is disappointed that a focus on early childhood education has disappeared as a result.

Young children need to have advocates. Without government as one of the advocates, impetus for change will become centralized in other organizations and change will be fragmented. It is up to the Ministry of Education to provide leadership.

Members of the select committee must recognize the great responsibilities that the school has assumed over the past number of years. Many of the responsibilities are not without the purview of education and should be carried out by others in society. The curriculum is overloaded. Health and social services are not being provided. It is time to address the issue of what is the role of the school.

That leads us to our final recommendation:

39. That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with major stakeholders in education, determine the role of the school and the role of other agencies supporting young children and their families.

A vision for the future: Our first recommendation in this paper dealt with the setting of a new agenda and we will expand on this recommendation at this time.

The agenda must address health delivery systems, family income, income-tax policies, food programs, labour, housing, education, child care, native education, special needs children, French-language rights and the feminization of poverty. Children are a responsibility of both parents and society, and responsibility means that priorities have to be set.

The federation believes that Ontario does not fully understand its responsibility to its young children. This may mean that some initiatives which do not contribute to a child's wellbeing may well have to be set aside, and I guess this is a question of, where does the funding come from? Is an opera house or a well-paved road more important than the child who will some day fully participate in the economic and social life of our province? Ontario's most valuable resources is its children.

The federation's recommendations are but a small beginning to address the needs of young children. The federation urges advocates for young children to consolidate their programs and develop the concept of total services to the child and the family. Then we can expect a well-loved, healthy child at the schoolroom door, ready to learn in a joyful, stimulating environment. Who can argue with such a blueprint for justice?

Before I take any questions there may be, perhaps I could go back and talk in terms of the activity-based learning. I have also provided you with a copy of a very successful document produced by the federation this year on student-centred learning. To date we have sent over 30,000 of these out to our districts across the province and schools are using them when they send their report cards with students in order to explain exactly what activity-based learning is all about.

In another venture that we got into with the Ministry of Education, approximately five years ago, 1986, we had a joint venture with the very successful *Ages 9 Through 12: A Resource Document for Junior Division Teachers* document. I am very pleased to announce that for our second document, *Ages 4 Through 8: A Resource Document for Primary Division Teachers*, we now have an agreement with the Ministry of Education that this document will also be produced by the Ministry of Education and distributed to all elementary teachers throughout the province. Those are two ventures with the government that we have been very pleased to be part of over the past five years.

At this particular point we would be pleased to take any questions.

The Chair: I am pleased that Marco Polo is still around, because when I was in school, every year there was a change of curriculum. I know more about Marco Polo than probably anything else in the world, because I kept studying it year after year. I said, "He finally made it in grade 4, and here I am in grade 7 still finding out where he went and how he got there."

Mr Miclash: It was the only name I could spell.

The Chair: Yes.

On one point you made about your phone call from the ministry, I would just remind you that the ministry has 120 days to reply to the report and it has not lapsed yet. Therefore, there may be other opportunities, but you understand that that process has to take place first.

Mr Keyes: Probably when they called, they got a busy signal.

The Chair: Yes, that is true.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am sure that must be the case, because I cannot believe that they would not have already taken in—I would be shocked to think that they would wait the 120 days to call.

1450

This has been a fascinating report, but before we get into it I want to just ask, is it possible to get

the ministry or someone to get us a photocopy of your new document, *Ages 4 Through 8: A Resource Document for Primary Division Teachers*? I remember the first one, and I have a copy of that, but given that we are dealing with that group and what we are talking about here, it would be interesting to see how that co-operation worked out between the two of you and have a look at it. I presume a lot of what you are talking about here shows up in philosophical terms, although not in the kinds of recommendations that you have come forward with. It would be interesting to get a copy, if that is possible.

Mr Martin: I do not see that being a problem.

Mr Lennox: I will presumably make a contact call to the Ministry of Education so that we eliminate the surprise. We have just signed the agreement, I think as of last Friday. We could certainly get you a document, which is in its draft form, if you will understand that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That would be fine.

Mr Lennox: It certainly is going through the edit and the whole bit. Yes, we will be able to get you that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I am not suggesting that necessarily be considered one of our public exhibits, but rather something that would be for our use as we move towards the final writing of the report. So, yes, a copy of the draft would be fine, and ministry people are here as well who could take the message back, rather than you having to phone or whatever, because I know they are busy trying to get to you through the minister's office and I would hate for you to occupy that line.

The Chair: Moving right along.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I just want to say that this is the kind of report that does blow the lights out in a place. It is so jammed full of recommendations and well presented and the language is very clear. It is a wonderful document for your own people, it seems to me, to understand where the federation is coming from, but also in terms of trying to enunciate to parents and others the importance of the role of the primary years. I think it is just a superb presentation and hard to totally digest in the length of time that we have.

I was particularly pleased with some of your comments around resource centres. We have had a little bit about that. I forgot about the old *Partners in Action* plan. Maybe this is not a bad title to look back at and say that it is time to bring into play. I think your comments about public health in the schools have been raised by others, but I think are really important to make here.

One thing you did not talk much about, although it can be seen to be drawn from what you said, is the role of counselling in the elementary panel. Given the limitations under the Education Act at the moment in terms of the counselling rule, I wondered whether you have some specific comments you would like to make on that, specifically, again, to deal with these younger children within the system. There is almost a presumption inherent in the present funding mechanism that they do not need counselling of any sort.

Mr Martin: I know it is one of the general secretary's favourite topics. I will start it off and then I will pass it off to the general secretary.

We are strong believers that there should be guidance counselling in every K to 8 school. We believe that if guidance counsellors were available for these young children where they could go and express their problems and have a chat with someone who has the time to sit down and listen to the individual, a lot of the problems that are generated in 9 and 10, in a high school situation, would probably be in fact eliminated. It is a policy of OPSTF that guidance counsellors be available in all K to 8 schools, so although it is not part of the brief, it is certainly a belief of the organization. David might want to add to that.

Mr Lennox: I do, because you have to draw the line someplace with regard to individual counselling at the grade 7 and 8 area. I separate that from career counselling, individual counselling.

When you come down into the primary grades, being a JK, SK, 1, 2 and 3, you may need a combination of strategies. The counselling there, the guidance services there, may end up having a great deal more communication with the home and that type of linkage with the home to enhance the growth of the child, so that sitting down and having a dialogue with the child about problems that he is having—it may be that the guidance teacher may also be the classroom teacher or the resource withdrawal teacher, but I think that in the first five years it should be that parent linkage where the parents are very much part of that, whereas by the time they get to secondary school, they are often the teachers and we cannot help that much.

I think that the linkage has to be not so much with the direct sit down and analyse the child as to link with the parents. We have to get across that—call it a gap. We have always thought about guidance as being for the student rather than for the student's environment. I think that it is where we see it being tremendously beneficial.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that is a very important distinction and quite helpful.

The labour law change: We have sort of danced around it a little bit, I guess, but nobody has really addressed it as specifically as you have around a changed law to allow people that time to go to the school.

Clearly, there would have to be some sort of definition of what was appropriate, both in terms of the length of times, or the number of times, and the purposes, one would think. It would be very helpful to know if you have done any work on that or whether your ideas on this are still in the very formative stage as well, because we have not done any sort of real discussion about what would be the appropriate limitations to put into legislation.

Mr Martin: To my knowledge, we have not done any studies in the federation. I think we all have our own personal opinions. I can give you my personal opinion, and then we can get to the opinions of the general secretary and the first vice-president.

I believe one of the major things that a parent should have the right to be able to do is to come and talk with the parent or talk with the teacher on a professional development day. Too often we end up having a parent coming in for an interview at nine o'clock at night. They are absolutely exhausted from a day's work, and basically the last thing they want to do is to hear bad news about an individual student. If it is good news, it kind of makes their day, but if it is bad news, it is the last thing they wanted to hear before they go home and make dinner. I think they could have the opportunity to come in within the school day. Professional development or parent interview days would be one thing.

I think also that if you are going to put forth activity-based learning, we have a lot of European families that are unfamiliar with this type of learning within our classroom. They are used to the straight rows of desks with the children sitting there and putting their hands up to give an answer. I believe that if we are going to sell activity-based learning, the parents have to be part, and therefore they are going to have to have time to be able to come into the school and actually see it in progress. It is good to send home this type of material. However, nothing is better than to have the individual right in the classroom and see how it works.

Those are two areas that I would definitely believe would be worthwhile to be able to put in labour law. David, do you have any others?

Mr Lennox: When I was working on this section of the paper, I considered that question, and the answer that went through my mind was twofold.

The one half has been applied for a long time about some type of flexible schoolday on days that we do parent-teacher interviews, so you could start a school at noon and go through to the evening. We know the problem with that with child care in the morning and so forth, but we have always had this schoolday structured on those particular days. Now we have gone to professional activity days.

The other half of the coin, though, is that my head says to me that the law should state that on up to two half-days or three half-days a year a parent may be released, and then we would have to put the experts together to say, "What are our highest priorities?"

As far as I am concerned, the first priority is when a child starts school, in kindergarten, the parent taking the child to school. I have had situations where the parents have come and dropped the child off on his first day of junior or senior kindergarten at eight o'clock in the morning so they can get to work, and that is the parent-child introduction to the school.

My head says to me that as a start, maybe two or three times a year, we would have to be able to clearly identify some areas of priority for parental visitation. I had rattled that around, Richard. Gene?

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Mr Lewis: It is an interesting question, but I do not think the logistics of the question are nearly as important as the message that you give to children, because many employees have provisions in their collective agreements to have their teeth filled or various options of medical treatments or funerals or convocations or those types of things, but the message you give to the young child is that to be at the school to work with the child or with the teacher is not nearly as important as all of these personal considerations of the adult.

I think the whole focus of the presentation is, how much does this society value its children and what kinds of signals are we giving to them and what is our responsibility that flows from that in funding and providing this type of access to parents?

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think that is very helpful and you make a good point. Ultimately, I suppose you could just add to the parental leave sections in law a finite number and then have within that the possibility of somebody being

able to go to the school. The danger is that it might end up being used for sick days for the child, if you know what I mean, rather than for that purpose, because I think your point is an important point to be made in terms of the message that we want to come out from it.

There is one other small thing—well, no, it is not small, it is a major issue that I want to ask about. I think you are talking about the symbolic amalgamation of those areas in the ministry to move away from a specialization, and this field is a very important one. It just slipped right by me. I had not even thought about that in terms of its symbolism at this point, and I just want to say that you are the first to draw attention to that. I think it is an interesting point at this time, when we are trying to focus in and we are all trying to say this is the important stage, that all of a sudden we move to a broader kind of organizational format.

I wanted to ask you something specific around the compensatory grant system. You talk a lot, as others have, about some of the extra support services, whether it is food or other kinds of things that need to be there in the schools so that you can deal with a hungry child, and other kinds of issues. Have you done much work specifically around the compensatory grant formula and the rejigging of that that is going on, I gather, at the moment within the ministry? Have you, as a federation, done much in terms of analysis of that very antiquated formula, in my view, and where you think it should be going to make sure there is some good base funding there?

I think it was the Toronto board yesterday that was making the argument that we spend \$400 million plus on special ed to help kids with problems in a remedial fashion afterwards. If we had just provided some supports, maybe greater than the \$70 million-odd or whatever it is that we have in the total compensatory package at the moment, we might have avoided some of those extra costs. I wondered if you have any specific messages for us around a compensatory education formula.

Mr Martin: I am going to pass to the financial expert of the federation.

Mr Lennox: The answer is that we have done a cursory look at it. About three months ago, in discussions with the director of school business and finance, Mr Trbovich, when he was looking at topics, we started into a study of compensatory education, which was one of the areas he was interested in as well. I know that it was not one of the three that he drew out, the northern transportation allowance and the calculation of

average daily enrolment. Of the three that he was looking at, compensatory education was sort of next on the line.

You are correct that the system is antiquated. You are also correct that in most of the situations where we can identify compensatory education, we are dealing with low-income families that do need school breakfast and lunch programs and that it is time for us to analyse that.

The first statement I heard was, "Let's do away with it." The answer is that the differences across this province and in jurisdictions of wealthy to poor communities cry out for just the opposite, to providing more focus on it. We were looking forward to school business and finance pushing our focus right on to that topic. It may be in the next two or three months—hopefully it will be—but we have heard no more about the changeover.

The Chair: Mr Miclash, talking about OPSTF.

Mr Miclash: Yes, and as a former member of the OPSTF, I always look forward to your presentations. I was just sitting here thinking of Dave's first appearance, when I was a teacher anyway, about 12 years ago, Dave, in Kenora, and you talked about the guidance aspect in the elementary schools. Like Richard, I am quite surprised that that was not touched upon in your presentation to us today, and the importance of that in terms of early childhood education.

I am interested in the corporal punishment issue. I am just wondering, is that a board decision today in terms of corporal punishment?

Mr Martin: David.

Mr Lennox: Just watch. My apologies, Mr President.

Mr Martin: I can see you are so excited to answer that question.

Mr Lennox: I want to thank you for the question, because the thing that concerned me was that Ontario came that close to removing corporal punishment two years ago—that close. Corporal punishment, the right to do that, is set out in regulation 262, and the fact was that when we were rewriting 262, corporal punishment at one stage was out, was removed. In the next issue we got, it was back in.

Mr R. F. Johnston: Bette Stephenson had just sort of whumped through the old ministry offices.

Mr Lennox: The situation is that each board across the province can pass a bylaw of its board saying there shall not be any corporal punishment. If everyone did, fine, but the province

should be taking a stand on it. We also deal with section 43 of the Criminal Code on this federally right now, but the situation is that the province should be taking a stand that this is unacceptable and should amend regulation 262 so that it is no longer part, it is part of the history of Ontario rather than the current practice in Ontario.

It was a situation where, at the very last moment, some school trustees spoke up and stated: "You can't remove that. Principals need that in their desk drawer to threaten." That is a very interesting statement in 1990. I think we should take that progressive step in this province and remove it right out of education from the provincial level and not leave it up to the various school boards around the province.

Mr Miclash: Thank you for clarifying that, Dave.

You mention in your third recommendation the encouraging of young people, and I notice you have included a number of target groups there. Do you have any suggestions from the federation in terms of what can be done to encourage these target groups?

Mr Martin: The federation did a study last year on trends and people entering into the faculties of education. We found that in the majority of cases, as far as the males were concerned, they did not determine that they would like to get into the teaching profession until about the ages of 18 to 21. One of the problems this creates is that in the faculties of education there are two criteria that are constantly used for admission. One is academic grading and then the second one is a personal profile by the individuals.

It is not the number of males applying to the faculties. I think we do have a lot of males applying, but they do not do well on the experience with young children as they have been growing up, because they have been going out into the work field and they have not decided they want to be teachers and therefore they do not have the experience of working with the young students. So that is one of the problems.

To encourage people to go into education, I think what we have to do is—you see the posters out there of the uncommon places for women to work, with the construction hats, and I think that is getting a message into the guidance offices around the province when you see those. The same type of thing could probably be used for the males and working with young children. Constantly talking in terms of guidance days, job market days in the high school, to make teaching as one of the careers that you may wish to get

yourself involved in would be another way of doing it.

Gene is also involved in teaching education, so he might have some ideas in that area.

1510

Mr Lewis: I think Bill has covered most of them. The fact is that young men are staying away from teaching in droves; 14 per cent of the candidates in the primary junior division at the faculties this year are male. At a time when a number of our families are single-parent families and usually the parent is the mother, we need those role models in the schools. We simply have to undertake public relations campaigns to convince more males that teaching is indeed a career.

In the past sometimes men have gotten into it because they wanted to move into the administrative positions. Over the past few years access to those positions has not been as available and a number of men perhaps have chosen not to get into teaching for that reason. We have to educate young men that teaching is a viable career of itself.

Speaking to first-year teachers in some of the districts this year, some comment on the inadequacy of starting salaries. With the grades required to get into a faculty of education, many of them can get into business or medicine or law and start at a salary which will provide a better income for their families. That is one aspect of it. I think the focus has to be that it is a viable career for young men. We just have not done much promotion of that concept in this province.

Mr Keyes: If I can just follow up on it, Gene, I am wondering whether or not—you said it in a very indirect way—our affirmative action program has been too successful perhaps as one of those factors. That is what I seem to hear slightly from some of the males within the system. So I am wondering, from within the system has that prompted some of the other responses for their not going in?

I have two or three questions along the same line of teacher education. Has the federation attempted to do the "poster approach" for the high schools, as has been done by some other ministries for minority groups and women into policing and firefighting and so on, things like that?

Mr Lewis: I will respond to your first question regarding the success of the affirmative action programs in promotion of women. Perhaps out in the field that may have some bearing. The reality within this organization is that we believe that the children of the province deserve an appropriate

balance of male and female role models at all levels within the educational system. We have been very supportive of seeing more women in positions of added authority, because that gives the kind of image to the young boys and the young girls that we want to give.

On the other issue, of promoting it as a career for men and the initiatives of the federation, we are in the midst of a program, which we will bring to school boards as the spring unfolds, requesting the boards to become involved in those types of activities. It is simply too overwhelming a task for an organization with the resources that this organization has to take it on singlehandedly. So we will be looking for partners.

Mr Lennox: Ken, I have to give you two other points. Gene makes very astute statements, but the critical thing with regard to the affirmative action aspect is that while it has been most positive, and I do not think it is a big barrier in this situation, because of the province's thrust in society for affirmative action and the employment equity aspect of it, the ministry has not chosen as yet to flag that this area is a problem. With the percentage of retiring male teachers in the next 10 years, you are going to turn the elementary schools into, I am going to state, better than 80 per cent female. If you believe that is correct to do in our society, then we have got to have a long chat. So I alert you to that.

The other thing about our federation is that because we unfortunately, under the Ontario Teachers' Federation bylaw, represent the male public elementary teachers, for us to go out and be the sole flag bearers of the male role problem at the elementary schools becomes seen or perceived as self-serving. So while we have no trouble identifying it, we cannot be the sole flag bearers on this topic. The year 2000 is going to be too late, if we have 80 or 85 per cent of the elementary teachers in the public schools being women, to reverse a problem you have been alerted to a decade before.

Mr Keyes: Have you been able to identify any other major factors there? Have you done any type of in-depth analysis? I guess it is hard to get at them. If you go at the 14 per cent who went into the faculty of ed, that is no good because they are there, they are looking for it. I guess within the faculty of education, though, you might check as to how many of them are going into the secondary level and how many are going into the elementary level. That in itself is probably another revealing statistic at the moment. I am just trying to get a handle on whether there is

something else. Somebody quickly usually says, "It's money, they don't get enough money," but I really doubt that it is a very significant factor. I may be wrong, you may choose to say otherwise, but it has got to be something else about the perception that society has of the role that they will fulfil if they are in the elementary panel, and particularly the primary division.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That is also one of the things mentioned right at the beginning. That is, if your experience in working with small children is seen now as important—and it should be, it seems to me—then the problem is part of the socialization of the young men in terms of whether during high school that was acceptable or not for them to be doing much of, part of it is where they took their job opportunities and what they saw, whether they were not thinking about becoming teachers anyhow until they got to the end of their academic career. There are lots of reasons why the way the society works has actually programmed it fairly effectively that at the bottom end—the bottom end in terms of age—the day care worker and the early childhood educator in the school are seen to be primarily better adapted to women.

I think there are lots of reasons why affirmative action is required there, but politically there is an extension of what you said about your problem about being seen to be self-serving. The difficulty for a government, I would imagine, to move too aggressively in this area would be to be seen to be coming between two federations and maybe showing preference for one of the federations. Maybe that is why there is some caution on the other side, although the largeness of the issue you are raising would make that seem to be something which could easily be dealt with in terms of the political side.

Mr Martin: I think another area is the status attached to the job. A lot of people think there is more status to being a grade 13 chemistry teacher than to being a grade 1 teacher, and until the male gets into the situation of the grade 1 class and finds out all the rewards you can get out of early childhood education, he frowns away from it because he wants that status of specialization.

Also, to be very blunt with you, if you look at the working conditions of a secondary teacher and compare them to the working conditions of an elementary teacher, particularly at the elementary level, in grades 1, 2, 3, just preparation time as one of the reasons, it does not take teachers too long to realize where the better working conditions are and therefore direct their attentions to those areas. We are trying to

improve that through our collective negotiations and have made great strides in that. I believe that once we are equal in working conditions, hopefully we will have just as many people attracted to those elementary areas as well.

Mr Keyes: We had a male kindergarten teacher presenting today, so—

Mr Martin: We do have them.

Mr Keyes: I did want to ask one other question. I know time is way over. You did not touch on it at all. That continuum between the early childhood educator working in the schools of the future and our new schools where we have all the day care facilities and the training for teachers in general to me is still one of my keen areas to look at. How, as we create more facilities that way, are we going to really blend the two together? I do not want to harp on it, but it is my pet horse at the moment.

Mr Martin: The early childhood educators who are coming out of Ryerson, for example, and are qualified to teach in the child care areas, I believe there is a place for them in the JK-SK, but I believe that teachers' qualifications are also essential in the JK-SK. If that means that these people have to take additional courses or gain the experience by being involved in those programs, we would look at that as being a positive step of integrating. However, we do believe they should be under the Ontario Teachers' Federation, they should have an Ontario teacher's certificate. Therefore, if they want to take those extra qualifications where they even limit themselves to teaching JK and SK only and stop it at that particular point and therefore would not have to go through all the other studies that are taken for the regular classroom teacher.

Mr R. F. Johnston: That might be a serious problem for those people. We would get a hierarchy of elementary teachers at that stage if we do that, which is problematic.

1520

Mr Keyes: But I say you have to go both ways. Whether you are trying to take the ECE person and bring him up to, say, the role of JK-SK, I think there is much of their training that would be a great advantage to all our primary teachers. That is what I am looking at, this mingling here. That has got to have a lot of discussion.

Mr Lewis: Part of this whole discussion, though, is the focus of the brief, and we are hitting on it right now. What you are basically saying is that those people who work with younger children need less adequate training than

those people who work with older children and secondary school students. At least that is what I am drawing from your comments, and I do not accept it.

Mr Keyes: No, I am saying they need more. It is the reverse. I am not saying that at all. I do not know how you get that.

Mr R. F. Johnston: I think what we are saying—I am coming on the same sort of line on this—is that if you look at how somebody can get his OTC and actually have never even taught in a kindergarten practicum or, because of the way it works JK through grade 6, that person may have less early childhood experience in some ways in developmental theory than some of the courses—I will put it that way—that are offered now in the community colleges, I guess what we are looking at is that adding status to this section under the OTCs might, in fact, require adding in extra kinds of training that early childhood educators are getting in the community colleges now to the OTC expectation.

The ECEs, I agree with you, if we are going to have them as teachers and not have a hierarchy, are going to have to get their OTCs as well. There must be ways to at least give some recognition to some of their equivalencies, because at the moment you could have taken all sorts of childhood development theory and not get any credit for that to be able to even enter a faculty at this stage, which seems to me to be a bit mind-boggling at this stage.

I guess if we moved to your recommendation or FWTAO's or a couple of others to have a ratio of 16 to one, or 15 to one in some cases, in JK—and we are pushing JK like crazy—the need for new teachers with training is going to be exceptional, and if we can find some of those people who have got the ECE background and get them some of their OTC pedagogic kinds of training in a way that recognizes some of their background, then that will help us make that move. And the same can be true for some people who may have been doing all of their teaching in grades 3, 4 and 5 and have very little experience at all with JK stuff, that they can get some ECE enrichment as well in ways which hopefully are flexible enough to accommodate the need for the move we are talking about and keep the status. That is what we are searching for.

Did that help, or did it just hurt?

Interjection.

The Chair: I do point out to the other presenters that we had a power failure and we are running a little late for that reason. I trust you are patient with us on that.

I very much appreciate your appearing before us and I very much appreciate your brief. I think that it was very comprehensive, as judged by the discussion it evoked. We look forward to seeing you at another time.

Mr Martin: Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today, and we look forward to seeing the recommendations and your report on early childhood education.

Mr Keyes: Just as you are leaving and on camera, how many different languages is this printed in?

Mr Martin: It has been investigated to be many languages, but it only has been printed in English at the moment.

The Chair: The next organization is the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. We have Herb Goldsmith, executive director; Sandra Stewart, the president; Judith Preston, the executive vice-president, and Mike Harkins, director. If you could come forward and take your place, the floor is yours. I did read out four names; I see only three people. Perhaps the gentleman does not—

Mr Goldsmith: He decided to stay in the background.

The Chair: Could you just indicate which gentleman decided to stay in the background.

Mr Goldsmith: Mike Harkins.

The Chair: It is just for the benefit of Hansard, so that it can identify you when you are answering questions. The floor is yours if you would like to proceed, please.

ASSOCIATION OF DAY CARE OPERATORS OF ONTARIO

Mr Goldsmith: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario I would like to thank you for this chance to address you. With me today is the president of our association, Sandra Stewart, and our vice-president, Judith Preston. I am Herb Goldsmith, the executive director.

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario supports a quality child care system for Ontario. However, it questions the need to integrate the system with the Ministry of Education. The concerns which the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario bring to your attention revolve around three topics: the impact on the child care field as it now exists, the impact on children aged four and five and general concerns.

Ontario is experiencing an acute staff shortage of early childhood educators. Many centres find

themselves operating without enough qualified staff. Others are forced to eliminate spaces. The rate at which professional staff leave the field is unusually high. The field is left understaffed and in a state of flux as a result of low salaries and high stress levels. Creating many additional spaces will only add to the problem for existing centres and for new ones.

The largest number of child care spaces now available is in the preschool group, with 63,440 spaces in 1989. Next is the four- and five-year-old range, with a total of 28,248 spaces. The addition of child care spaces in schools will increase licensed care for the ages where the need is lowest. The proposed centres will not accommodate infants or toddlers, the age groups where more spaces are desperately needed.

There are several areas in Ontario experiencing an excess of child care spaces, both nonprofit and private. Encouraged by the government's Blueprint for Child Care Services, nonprofit centres have opened in a haphazard pattern. The location has often been chosen irrespective of the actual need in the area. Geographical needs are an important consideration. In Metro Toronto, centres are operating with licensed spaces vacant due to funding problems. Is it reasonable to open new spaces when the current spaces are underutilized and underfunded?

The reality is that roughly 10 per cent of Ontario's children are cared for in licensed private centres. A further 10 per cent are using licensed nonprofit centres. It is unwarranted to assume that the remaining 80 per cent of the families want formal care, regardless of whether they are willing and able to pay for it. Studies have shown that parents want freedom of choice. It is wrong to base a mammoth plan of school-based child care centres and enhanced junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten on this assumption. Let us fully use our existing licensed child care spaces before embarking on this proposal.

"Recapturing space": What a frightening term. In the last few years child care centres have been established in the public schools; for example, 40 centres in Scarborough alone. The cost to the taxpayer was approximately \$240,000 per centre. Now the schools must establish full-day SK and half-day JK. They will therefore require a minimum of three times the space previously used for the half-day senior kindergarten. The simplest way to provide that space is to "recapture" it from the child care centre, whose one-year lease need not be renewed. Voilà, space

for SK and JK. Unfortunately, many previously existing child care spaces disappear.

It is urgent that the two ministries communicate about these problems. The goal of New Directions for Child Care and the enhanced JK and SK programs was the creation of more child care spaces. In Scarborough, 540 licensed child care spaces will disappear. This will not achieve the ministries' goal.

The proposed changes to the JK and SK programs will have a major impact on the existing child care programs. Implementation will see the school system providing child care, largely on a free basis. Only the families of children three years eight months of age and older will benefit. Most licensed centres, however, provide care for children from 30 months to five years. In the future, only children two and a half to three and a half will need their services. It is costly to convert and run spaces intended for preschoolers to toddlers or infants. We would predict, therefore, the demise of much of the existing formal licensed system in Ontario, both nonprofit and private. There will also be a fundamental shift in preschool teacher training, regulation standards and financing of child care.

1530

The school system has traditionally been designed for the older child. The program has been educational in focus. The child care program has always been primarily oriented to nurturing and care. The learning focus in ECE programs has been appropriate for the age and developmental level of each child. There is definitely a learning time in the formal education sense included in early childhood education programs.

It is recognized by most child care experts that motivation, self-esteem and confidence are the basis for success in life. Our goal, in all ECE programs, is to help each child develop the skills necessary to be independent and to deal with decision-making. Preschool children, including four- and five-year-olds need a combination of care and nurturing coupled with the freedom to develop as individuals. Early childhood educators, in our centres, strive for and continue to uphold these necessary qualities in each child.

Subjecting a child of this age to formal education all day while neglecting the child's nurturing and freedom is not in keeping with a young child's needs. ADCO believes that traditionally educated primary school teachers are not qualified to provide the needed care for preschool children on a full-time basis.

Who will pay, the individual user or society? Who can afford it, the individual or society? Child care in the school system will be much more expensive. School-based centres will reach capacity only if the service is offered free. There are vacant spaces in licensed centres because parents who cannot qualify for subsidy have chosen less expensive care. This issue has two sides: can the individual families afford the cost and can the taxpayer afford it?

Families will rely on care provided on a daily basis. Care on professional development days and holidays is a major problem. Children attending full-time SK will no longer have space at the local private centre. The school-based centre will have enough difficulty handling the JK children—morning and afternoon children will have to attend all day—without having to accommodate SK children as well. Space, staffing, appropriate programming and equipment are serious considerations which before- and after-school care programs will need to address. Parents need to know the arrangements for their children during all these periods.

There is a large gap between the child-staff ratios used by the Ministry of Education and those used by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. For example, the ratio in a licensed centre is eight to one for preschool groups. For five-year-old children the ratio is 12 to one. In the school system the ratios are much higher. One staff person should not be expected to cope with the needs of such a large group of children. This cannot lead to improvement in the quality of child care.

Some boards are better able to provide these proposed services than others. Some municipalities are better able to fund child care services through their regional offices than others. The areas with the smaller tax base will have the most difficulty in affording the additional tax burden.

"The child care system is also considerably less expensive than the education system and it fulfils an educational function during the critical early childhood years. The comparative per-hour cost of child care for children four years of age is significantly less than that of junior kindergarten programs: \$2.80/hour in municipal centres as opposed to \$7.75 in a Toronto school."

There will be a significant increase in the total cost of child care. The government of Ontario, and ultimately the taxpayers, will have to bear it. A largely school-based child care system will be more costly on a per-child basis. Many families which do not now require, or pay for, child care will take advantage of the apparently free JK-SK

child care alternative. This will further increase the cost. In fact, almost every child, in the appropriate age group, will be a user of the new school-based system.

The report of the task force on child care in 1986 estimated the cost of universal child care for Canada at \$11 billion per year. Others felt that this sum was far too low. One noted economist estimated the cost to be \$40 billion. Ontario represents about 40 per cent of Canada's total population. It would, therefore, be reasonable to estimate that the cost for Ontario would be \$4.5 million to \$15 billion per year.

Perhaps the total cost of a school-based child care system would be less than the above estimates, since it does not purport to accommodate the younger age groups. Even at 50 per cent, the monetary implications are staggering. The development of a school-based system will result in the demise of the remaining segments of the present child care system.

For the government, regardless of which ministry provides the funds, to pay capital costs as well as operating costs is inefficient and should not be necessary. School-based centres will operate inefficiently. They will be a continual drain of taxpayer dollars.

Ms Stewart: The general concerns that we have: In administration, ADCO has difficulty in envisioning how boards composed of unqualified parents can effectively provide the framework for quality child care programs. Their inexperience promotes inefficiency and high costs. The various boards will rapidly run out of volunteers to sit on them and therefore become defunct or inactive. This has already happened in Ontario. It will happen again to a certain percentage of the proposed centres. Contingency plans must be prepared.

There is little initiative to be efficient in a nonprofit setting. This is more true in the proposed situation of child care in schools. The boards must know that neither the Ministry of Community and Social Services nor the Ministry of Education can allow the centre to close. They know that whatever their mistakes, the various government levels will bail them out. Consequently, costs to parents and taxpayers will escalate.

The proposed changes are fundamentally a shift from a largely user-pay child care system to a taxpayer-financed one. Only about 15 per cent of all family units or households in Ontario require child care. Is this a change that taxpayers will support? ADCO does not believe that 85 per cent of the taxpayers will sanction a formal

tax-based child care system. Universal day care has not been voted on by the electorate. Other priorities face the taxpayer—the economy, care for the elderly and the rising cost of health care, to name a few. ADCO cannot approve the start of universal child care for children ages 3.8 and up.

Child care needs vary throughout the province. The requirements of Metro Toronto are not necessarily the same as those of Thunder Bay. Furthermore, each region or municipality will finance most of the operating costs of child care in their areas. JK and SK are not mandated as part of the formal primary school curriculum in Ontario. For all these reasons, we believe a final decision as to how much or how little child care in the school system should be left to the individual municipality. Consultation and discussion between all parties are required. ADCO believes that the following groups at the community level should participate in the discussion: representatives from the local Comsoc office, representatives from the office which provides subsidy, trustees from the board of education, local politicians and day care operators, with both sectors involved. It is only with accurate input that a true picture of the need will arise.

Private, independent child care centres were the grass roots and pioneers of child care in Ontario. They, financially and physically, responded to the needs of families years ago when the need arose. The new proposals can and will cause serious financial and physical damage to many child care centres. Private child care centres wish to keep their status and business. We believe there is a need to work in harmony with the common goal of high-quality child care.

In many sectors, other government levels are recognizing the need for privatization. It is recognized that services run by government are more expensive and sometimes mediocre in quality. Private industry can feasibly provide viable services in a more efficient manner than government. In ADCO's brief "More and Better Child Care" we state:

"Where a program has good management and staff, its quality will measure up; where management and staff are less capable, there will be quality problems. And this is true regardless of the ownership of the centre—whether it be municipal, not-for-profit, or privately owned."

This also holds true regardless of the operation's location, even in a school. The location does not guarantee quality; the administration does. ADCO questions the advisability of the development of a province-wide child care

system by inexperienced persons or by the government.

Historically, the private sector has provided more child care than the nonprofit private sector or the nonprofit public system. Yet now we have another series of government proposals which will kill, even more rapidly, this sector of service provision. Private centres are small businesses, small businesses which traditionally have been owned and operated predominantly by women. This government professes to support small business. This government professes to be in support of women in business and in the workforce.

The present government is now biting the hand that has fed and cared for our children. A very serious question is, are they biting off more than they can chew?

ADCO is convinced that the only reason there is any variance in such items as salary levels is the difference in playing fields. With capital grants, tax relief and 100 per cent of the direct operating grant, the nonprofit centres are at a distinct advantage.

Parents and staff of private centres should receive the fair and equitable treatment to which they are entitled. However, until the government recognizes the great injustice of discriminatory funding practices, the field will continue to be uneven and unfair.

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ADCO recommends:

1. That the development of full-day SK stop, pending further study of feasibility in terms of space, finances and the welfare of the children;
2. That the development of JK programs with full-day child care attached stop, pending further study of the feasibility in terms of space, finances and the welfare of the children;
3. That any newly licensed child care spaces be authorized by the Ministry of Community and Social Services only if the municipality also receives a percentage increase in its base operating budget to pay for the use of the spaces;
4. That encouragement and financial aid be given to any child care centre able to provide quality child care, regardless of the tax or corporate designation of the operator;
5. That financial aid and ongoing support go to operators willing and able to provide a quality service for those age groups, regardless of their tax or corporate structure;
6. That it be recognized that not all areas need child care located in a school setting.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs O'Neill: I wonder if we could go back to recommendation 4. Would you like to say a little bit more about what you are recommending that do?

Ms Stewart: What actually are you questioning? I am sorry.

Mrs O'Neill: I do not really know of what you speak, "regardless of the tax or corporate designation of the operator."

Ms Stewart: That would be in respect to ourselves as private operators. We do provide the same services under the same ministry rules and regulations and follow all the Day Nurseries Act. I do not know if you are aware that teachers in our centres are receiving a 50 per cent direct operating grant. The nonprofit centres or municipal centres are receiving 100 per cent. That is what that is in reference to.

Mrs O'Neill: Oh, it has nothing to do with a school support designation. That is what I was getting it mixed up with.

Ms Stewart: It would be child care centres that we are talking about.

Mrs O'Neill: So it has to do with whether it is profit or nonprofit and it has to do with the direct operating grant?

Ms Stewart: Yes.

Mr Keyes: I guess one of the questions I would like to look at is on the practical side. This is probably the only brief we have had, as we now conclude the hearings on this, that has kind of taken what I consider a very strong stand to try to stop what government has already announced as policy with regard to JK and SK and day cares in schools. I guess I am a little bit concerned at the approach you are taking in your recommendations now when the government has already announced the policy of what is happening. I guess I had expected that you would be looking at it, not as trying to say, "We are going to stop the government from doing what they have already announced they are going to do," but rather, "How do we now work with the government" in providing the very essential part you do. You do provide more child care than any of the other centres. What is the figure, 75 or 80 per cent you provide?

Ms Stewart: We provide about 45 per cent if we put the municipal and the nonprofit sectors as 55 per cent in Ontario.

Mr Keyes: It all depends on what you use as your definition, but you were always considered to be at least 50 per cent of that type of spaces.

It seems as though you are presenting a dilemma that you are going to be out of work, in a sense, and I just cannot see that ever happening, for so many reasons: the inability of the boards to cope with space in all the existing school structures, and the current policy providing child care space comes in new facilities only, and with deadlines set on JK and SK being realities. I guess that is my concern, that you might have looked at the recommendations in a different way, facing reality.

Ms Stewart: It is five years down the road before the proposals will all be in place, but we are looking at five years that we will be basically out of business, or out of two years of children.

The proposals were not made public knowledge until April, with the throne speech, so we did not have an opportunity to say anything at that point, prior to that. What we are suggesting is that it stop until further feasibility studies are done on those areas, as opposed to stop, period, and worrying about the meshing of the two systems together. That is what we are suggesting.

Mr Keyes: What we hear from literally 99 per cent of the groups that have been here is that the policy does not go nearly far enough; they are not finding anywhere near enough spaces to meet need. The big concern from there is the problems where there is very little building of new schools at all, and therefore, because it is not a policy to allow renovations in old schools for this type of capital works, that has been the plea from every group.

Ms Stewart: I think we are fieldworkers, as opposed to seeing it on the other end of ideology. We see the reality. There are vacant spaces in centres in Toronto, in Halton, where I am, and in Hamilton also.

Mr Keyes: In the private.

Ms Stewart: In all centres. When I say centres, I mean all. So to suggest that money is going to build new centres is ridiculous, actually, at this point, if there are spaces. It is somehow a media response that there is a big shortage of spaces. There are shortages in some areas, but the big shortage is subsidy money for parents and families needing subsidized spaces.

Mr Keyes: Would you not agree that probably the greatest area of shortage of spaces is in exactly the high-growth areas, which is where the government has agreed to place new facilities in new schools?

Ms Stewart: I would not necessarily, because I would say Burlington is a high-growth area very

populated with families and there has been an excess of spaces in the last year in all child care centres, both nonprofit and private.

Mr Keyes: One of the areas you have not touched on at all in here is going back to looking at personnel, etc, who work in the centres. Have you any comments on that as far as the need for more is concerned, the available supply of people to work in them, early childhood education training, anything of that nature?

Mr Goldsmith: As we mentioned in the brief, there is a definite shortage of early childhood educators. We see that as one of the potential problems. As the Ministry of Education moves more into the senior and junior kindergarten, there will be more of a drain on a very limited pool of early childhood education teachers who are there now. We are seeing it. Because they do not have the qualified people, they are starting to pick up some of the ECEs and it is compounding the problems right across the board. They cannot get them; we cannot get them. I know that the colleges are doing what they can, but they just cannot seem to generate enough graduates, and we cannot seem to keep enough of them in the field to deal with the present needs, and that is why any move to create more need for these teachers concerns us.

Mr Keyes: But as you are aware, with the JK and SK diploma they have to be fully qualified teachers with their Ontario teachers' certificate, which is quite vastly different than the training of ECE. That concerns me, because we have talked about that in our last groups as well.

Mr Goldsmith: There is a lot of movement in that, because there are a number of ECE teachers who are presently in that system. They started going in as assistants to junior kindergartens, but I know a number now who have contracts with the boards on the condition that if they take this course or that course, then they can continue in that position. So they are integrating them into the system now.

Mr Keyes: Thank you.

Ms Poole: I am actually just going to request that you give us a little further information, and I do not expect you to have it with you right now, but on page 8 you have stated that the comparative per-hour cost of child care for children four years of age is significantly less than that of junior kindergarten programs and you have cited the figures \$2.80 per hour in municipal centres as opposed to \$7.75 in a Toronto school. That seems like a very disproportionate amount, even taking into account that teachers would be more

highly paid than ECE care givers, so I wondered if the \$7.75 is an isolated incident with any special costs attached to it or if this would be a typical cost for a JK program. If you could provide us just the background documentation so that we have a better idea of what these figures mean, I would very much appreciate it.

The Chair: Another presenter yesterday used exactly the same figure. You may not have been present when he did say that. I think there was a question about where they were and where they were from as well. Just to bring you up to date, these two figures have been mentioned before.

Mr Keyes: As a follow-up which might be helpful to all of us, I sometimes wondered if they took into account the different pupil-teacher ratio in that aspect, and I really question whether they have or not, because in JK you would have one teacher to X number of students, let's say 20, and in day care facilities you would have three people to that same number. I wonder if they have been factored in that way, because I made a note of the same one here about the disproportionate differential between those two. I guess the brief you refer to probably has got the answer we are looking for at the bottom, in its source.

Ms Preston: I am looking at it now and it really does not. The only thing I can suggest that I could possibly do is write to the people who presented the brief and see if they have some background documentation and then forward it on to you.

Mr Keyes: But I think that is about the ratio, that there would be three teachers in ECE looking after that same number of children which one teacher would look after in the kindergarten.

Ms Preston: The \$2.80 would take into account the three teachers, though, just going by, you know, just off the top of my head—

Mr Keyes: What?

Ms Preston: With what our costs are.

Mr Keyes: Okay. That was a question I had asked.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation; we appreciate it.

We will be taking a four-minute recess and then starting into our in camera deliberations. Before we go, though, I appreciate the unofficial members of this committee, our two observers, Julie Mathien and Linda Perry, who have sat through thick and thin with us all this long period of time. We very much appreciate your being here and we appreciate your input and your background and getting the information. Thank you so much.

Dr Gardner: I do not think their role is finished.

The Chair: Their role is not finished, no. I agree. We are going to move into in camera

session. I would ask other people not involved directly with the committee to excuse themselves.

The committee continued in camera at 1552.

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